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# THE NATION

## AND ATHENÆUM

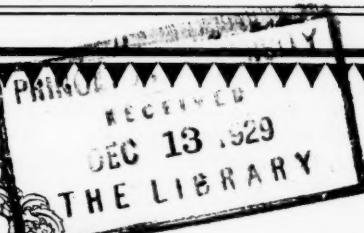
VOLUME XLVI - - - No. 9 SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30th, 1929. PRICE SIX PENCE  
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### THE LIMITS OF INSULAR SOCIALISM

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<b>FORTUNE.</b> Mon., Thurs., Sat., 2.30.	"THE THREE SISTERS."	<b>QUEEN'S.</b> Wed. & Sat., 2.30.	<b>THE APPLE CART.</b>
<b>GAIETY.</b> Tues. & Fri., 2.30.	"LOVE LIES."	<b>STRAND.</b> Wed. & Sat., 2.30.	<b>THE MAN WHO MISSED IT!</b>
<b>GLOBE.</b> Wed. & Sat., 2.30.	"CANARIES SOMETIMES SING."	<b>VAUDEVILLE.</b> Mon., Thurs. & Sat., 2.30.	"THE ROOF."
<b>HIPPODROME.</b> Wed., Thurs. & Sat., 2.30.	"MR. CINDERS."	<b>WYNDHAM'S.</b> Wed., Sat., 2.30 prompt.	"THE CALENDAR."
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**EDITH EVANS.** **CEDRIC HARDWICKE.**

**ST. MARTIN'S.** (Tem. Bar 1444.) EVGS., at 8.15. TUES., FRI., SAT., 2.30.  
"SORRY YOU'VE BEEN TROUBLED!"  
By **WALTER HACKETT.**  
**HUGH WAKEFIELD.** **MARION LORNE.**

## THEATRES.

**STRAND.** (Temple Bar 2666.) EVENINGS at 8.15.  
"THE MAN WHO MISSED IT!"

A Farceful Comedy. MATS., WED. & SAT., 2.30.

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## VARIETIES.

**COLISEUM,** Charing Cross. (Tem. Bar 3161.) Three Times Daily, 2.15, 5.15, 8.15.  
GRAND INTERNATIONAL  
VARIETY PROGRAMME  
Managing Director: **SIR OSWALD STOLL.**

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## NEXT WEEK'S DIARY.

**MONDAY.** Coliseum. "Melodies and Memories." Stoll Picture Theatre. Entire Week. "The Idle Rich," with **Conrad Nagel**, **Bessie Love**, **Leila Hyams** and **Robert Ober**; also "Emerald of the East" (Silent), with **Jean De Kuharski** and **Mary Odette.**  
**Regal.** "Long and Short" in the Sequel to "Alf's Button," "Alf's Carpet"; also "The Whirl of the World."  
**Empire.** "Excess Baggage," with **William Haines.**  
**London Pavilion.** "The Taming of the Shrew" continues.  
**Royalty.** "The Amorists," a Comedy by **H. Dennis Bradley.**  
**Everyman.** "The Storm," a Russian Classic by **Alex Osrovsky.**

**TUESDAY.**



# THE NATION

AND ATHENÆUM



VOL. XLVI.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1929.

No. 9

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## EVENTS OF THE WEEK

THE Unemployment Insurance Bill has now received its second reading in the House of Commons; and Mr. Tom Shaw has succeeded in creating a minor stir by a passage in the speech with which he wound up the debate for the Government. We may take it for granted that Mr. Shaw had not the least intention of suggesting the repudiation of part of the interest on the National Debt; but the words on which some have placed this sinister interpretation have probably a significance which it is worth while to explore. Mr. Shaw was replying to Mr. Lloyd George, who had stated that, while a good case could be made out for most of the provisions of the Bill if they were considered in isolation (though not for all, for Mr. Lloyd George expressed his "frank dislike" for the increased benefits to boys of seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen), he was very uneasy about the "tremendous bill" that was being piled up. Mr. Shaw's reply was to dilate on "a burden infinitely bigger than the social services," and he proceeded to make the familiar point that the monetary deflation of recent years has served to increase materially the real burden of the National Debt.

\* \* \*

This is perfectly true, and there would have been nothing at all startling in Mr. Shaw's stating it as vehemently as he liked, if he had not plastered his statement with sentences suggestive of remedial action; such as:—

"It is a fact that has to be faced either now or later, in any case before this country is ever going to be on its feet again."

And again:—

"There is a thing to start considering at once, and I make that as my contribution to the things that might be considered in the reviving of industry."

All this as the peroration of his speech. Clearly Mr. Shaw meant something more than a mere rhetorical argument that the rentiers, having done so well, could easily bear taxation to pay for increased social services. What, then, did he mean? If not an enforced reduction of the interest on War Loan, perhaps a departure from the gold standard? Not this either, we imagine; though it is probably nearer the mark. Probably all that Mr. Shaw had in mind was the present monetary inquiry, which he may hope will lead, somehow or other, to a reversal of the deflationary trend.

\* \* \*

But the main significance of Mr. Shaw's outburst does not lie in the question of what precisely he had in mind. The point of interest is that, so far from expressing on this matter the considered views of the Government, he was fairly obviously doing almost the reverse; that is to say, he was repeating in the House of Commons arguments that he has been urging in the Cabinet without making much impression. The tenour of his speech as a whole, in marked contrast to that of Miss Bondfield, went to show that he would have liked to raise the whole scale of unemployment pay substantially, is really disappointed that he cannot do



so, and is not disposed to accept at all readily the objection that the money is not available. This attitude is closely connected with another. Mr. Shaw obviously despairs of the idea of effecting a big reduction in the numbers of the unemployed. This despair appears to be almost universal in the Cabinet. It is certainly shared by Mr. Thomas, who is reduced to making silly speeches against women who work for "pin money."

\* \* \*

It is not surprising that the Government have abandoned the idea of passing their coal legislation before Christmas, even though this will apparently entail a postponement of the date at which the seven and a half hour day will take effect. There are other reasons for delay besides the congestion of the Parliamentary time-table; for the Government, we imagine, are some way yet from having put the finishing touches on their measure. But the congestion of business is real enough, and it must be aggravated in some degree by a discovery which was made last week by Mr. P. M. Oliver. It appears that the number of Under-Secretaries of State in the present House of Commons is larger than the number permitted by statute, and that each of the Under-Secretaries is technically liable to a fine of £500 per day. Mr. MacDonald is compelled, therefore, to introduce a Bill of Indemnity, which will, presumably, supply the House of Commons with an opportunity for some half-malicious questioning as to how the mistake came to be made and as to who is responsible for it.

\* \* \*

The Conservative Party Conference, which took place at the Albert Hall on Thursday and Friday of last week, was rather disappointing to those who expected or desired a great revolt against the Party machine. It was not, however, entirely satisfactory to Mr. J. C. C. Davidson, the Chairman of the Party, as the Conference rejected the arrangement by which the chief wire-puller, who is appointed by the Leader, has hitherto been the *ex-officio* Chairman of the Executive Committee, which is elected by delegates from the constituencies. Having disposed of this domestic issue the Conference turned with zest to its usual business of pressing a Protectionist policy upon its Party leaders. A resolution, moved by Sir Henry Page Croft, requesting that the policy of Empire development and the protection by safeguarding of British industry against unfair foreign competition should be placed prominently before the electorate, was received with great enthusiasm, and a solitary Free Trader who ventured to speak against it was first shouted down and then voted down. Intense satisfaction was displayed when Mr. Baldwin publicly adopted this resolution, but it is not yet clear whether the Party has been committed to an enlargement of its Protectionist programme. On the Friday, the Conference indulged in an orgy of anti-Soviet fury. Mr. Locker-Lampson moved a resolution protesting against "the resumption of diplomatic relations with Soviet Russia until these alien enemies have ceased all propaganda and paid up what they owe." Again the voice of reason tried to make itself heard, and again it was found in a minority of one.

\* \* \*

Preparations for the Five-Power Naval Conference are proceeding busily, and it is understood that the instructions to the Japanese delegates have already been approved. In view of the informal conversations which are, or should be, still taking place, it may be hoped that they are not too rigid. As at present defined, they are reported to include a demand for a 70 per cent. ratio in 10,000-ton cruisers, and parity with the United

States and the British Empire in submarines. Japan is in favour of reducing the tonnage of capital ships to 25,000 tons, and extending their life to twenty-five years. For other types, she proposes practically the same lives as are assumed by the British Admiralty in the official returns of naval strength. It is probable that an extension of these lives will be proposed by the British and American delegates, and one would have imagined that the Japanese, of all people, would have welcomed the postponement of replacements. Unfortunately, it seems clear that the Japanese delegates will be instructed to oppose obstinately any proposal for the total abolition of the submarine. In France, Press and public opinion is equally opposed to any weakening on the submarine issue, but Italy appears to be gradually coming round to the view that the question is, at least, one for discussion.

\* \* \*

The conversations between France and Italy are proceeding, apparently in a very amicable spirit. Italy continues to press, and France to reject, the old demand for Franco-Italian parity in global tonnage; but some tentative advances towards a compromise seem to have been made. Meanwhile, the French Cabinet has been engaged in a serious study of the demands to be put forward in London. They will have, probably, the most difficult task of any of the Governments, for while M. Briand will undoubtedly be genuinely anxious for the success of the Conference, a Government which is not too firmly established will have to take account of the highly suspicious attitude of Press and Parliament. It is significant that the Naval Committee of the Senate has chosen this moment to place on record its view that the programme of construction laid down by the *loi organique* of 1922, has become inadequate. But perhaps the greatest danger to the success of the Conference lies in the fact that the conversations between France and Italy are based entirely on the assumption of limitation by global tonnage instead of by categories—a method to which the United States is as strongly opposed as Great Britain.

\* \* \*

Some concern is being shown in Washington as to the possible effects on the Naval Conference of the renewed proposals for Philippine independence, which are expected to become a live issue during the Session of Congress which begins in December. It is suggested that while a grant of independence to the Philippines might reduce American naval requirements, it would lead to alarm in Australia, and a demand for an increase in the British Navy, by throwing the Islands open to Japanese penetration. This anxiety seems to be far-fetched. The Philippines are generally unsuitable for Japanese immigration; there seems no reason to assume that Japanese financial and commercial penetration would inevitably oust American or British interests; and even if imperialistic designs must be attributed (quite gratuitously) to the Japanese Government, it should be easy enough, in the grant of independence, to make provision against any disturbance of the *status quo* in the Western Pacific. It is to be hoped that the discussions in London are not going to be clouded by any silly revival of the "Yellow Peril" bogey.

\* \* \*

The German Government have laid the draft Bill for rejecting the Young plan before the Reichstag. So much they were obliged to do under the Referendum clause in the Constitution. But they have accompanied it with a reasoned criticism, showing that its adoption would constitute an irreparable set-back to German foreign policy. In addition to this, lawyers have re-



ported that the Bill itself involves a change in the Constitution, and requires, therefore, a two-thirds majority to pass it. When the Reichstag rejects the Bill, which it is certain to do, a Referendum will have to be held. The extreme Nationalists seem to have drafted the Bill, and forced the Government to put this cumbrous machinery in motion, more as a manoeuvre for consolidating the party than in any hope that it will become law. So far, the move has been fairly successful; the Nationalist Congress has endorsed the principles of the Bill, and by so doing has strengthened the hands of Herr Hugenberg. But these are successes of Nationalists over Nationalists. The Referendum will be the real test of their hold on the country; if the voting shows that these wild plans find no general acceptance, the moderate Nationalists may have something to say as to the wisdom of their leaders.

M. Georges Clemenceau died last Sunday, aged eighty-eight. It is rather difficult for the present generation to realize that M. Clemenceau first achieved international fame as the apostle of enlightenment and anti-militarism in the Dreyfus affair. He will be remembered as the implacable President of the Peace Conference at Versailles. A vivid picture of him in that capacity is given by Mr. J. M. Keynes in "The Economic Consequences of the Peace," and the impression given in that book is confirmed by the admirable character sketch which Mr. Lloyd George contributed to the DAILY EXPRESS last Tuesday.

"He regarded the League of Nations," writes Mr. Lloyd George, "with tolerant amusement. He came to the conclusion that President Wilson's preoccupation with it helped to keep him out of mischief. It could do no harm, and it was very useful for bargaining purposes. So he encouraged President Wilson in his exhausting labours to frame the Covenant. He had an almost wicked delight in seeing him wear out his strength on something which, as he thought, mattered not in the least. It kept the troublesome President from obtruding his exalted but impracticable ideals into matters like reparations, the occupation of the Rhineland, the German colonies, disarmament, and other questions which interested France."

"The old duellist was fencing not to kill, but to disarm," continues Mr. Lloyd George. "President Wilson went home with no visible wound, but with his sword snapped at the hilt." He adds a doubt, however, as to "who won the permanent triumph, the outwitted idealist or the adroit realist."

The consolidation of Eastern Europe, and particularly of the countries bordering on Russia, a most important stage on the road towards the establishment of security and the attainment of disarmament, has received a severe set-back by the latest occurrences in Latvia. This country, the second smallest and least populous of the Baltic States erected on the ruins of Tsarist Russia, contains national minorities which are important both in numbers and in cultural development. Up to the present Latvia's treatment of these minorities has, on the whole, been so exemplary as to win their firm support for Latvian institutions and secure their participation in the coalition Governments which are a permanent feature of Latvian politics. Now, however, the good feeling and harmonious relations hitherto existing have been seriously threatened by the passage last week of a law designed to exclude the members of the Landwehr from participation in the distribution of land with which the troops whose support was primarily responsible for the creation of Latvia have been rewarded. This discrimination against the Landwehr, which was wholly composed of Baltic Germans, threatens to create serious difficulties

with Latvia's minorities. Abroad it strengthens the hands of groups and Governments generally hostile to measures for reconciling minorities to their lot. Nevertheless it still does not appear too late for wiser counsels to prevail, and for Latvia to resume the proud position she has hitherto occupied as a State which, though diminutive in size, has set other nations an example in the wise and conciliatory treatment of national minorities.

The Chinese Government are said to be considering an appeal at Geneva, and a further appeal to all the signatories of the Kellogg Pact. They have not much reason to expect sympathy from either the League or the Powers. They have wasted opportunity after opportunity of negotiating direct with Moscow, and the latest Russian advance seems to be no more than a continuation of the long series of raids and reprisals, for which the Chinese have equal responsibility with the Russians. An appeal, nevertheless, cannot be ignored, and it is certainly high time that the ridiculous and dangerous situation on the Manchurian border was brought to an end. But neither the League nor the Pact signatories will hasten to move in the matter until they are satisfied that both the Soviet Government and Nanking are ready to accept their mediation, and to give effect to any settlement arrived at. The question is further complicated by the attitude of the Japanese Government, who are known to dislike the idea of any third-party intervention in Manchuria, save their own. It can hardly be believed, however, that Japan, a member of the League, and a signatory of the Pact, would seriously obstruct an attempt to settle the question by international action. As we go to press, it is stated that the Manchurian Government has come to terms with Russia.

While the Palestine Inquiry is still sitting, an attempt has been made by an Arab police messenger, named Abdul Ghani, to assassinate Mr. Bentwich, the Attorney-General to the Palestine Government. The incident shows that wild passions are still bubbling in the breasts of the Arab population. Mr. Stoker, counsel for the Arabs at the Inquiry, lost no time in expressing his clients' detestation of the crime, and nobody doubts that he was expressing the sincere feelings of respectable Moslems, but the villagers, amongst whom Abdul Ghani grew up, will probably regard him as a patriot and martyr. It is another illustration of the difficulty of the Commissioners' task.

The late Amir of Afghanistan has been executed, and Nadir now rules without a rival. When Habibullah's person had been secured, Nadir issued a public proclamation, saying that he forgave him from the bottom of his heart; but felt bound to submit his fate to the collective wisdom of those "interested in and responsible for the service and defence of the country." The judgment given by the Ministers and Notables was that Bacha-i-Saqao had, *inter alia*, caused the death of thousands of Moslems, "ruined the Government," and squandered the contents of the Treasury and the public arsenals. They therefore requested that the ex-Amir and his associates should be handed over to them, to be put to death. To this Nadir Shah answered that he was so deeply impressed by the "genuine feelings" of the signatories to the memorandum, that he could not be so churlish as to refuse the request. The new Amir should satisfy Mr. Schwab, for he has certainly condemned his rival to death "with the kindest feelings" and "in a gentlemanly manner."

## THE LIMITS OF INSULAR SOCIALISM

WE argued last week that Mr. Snowden, in framing his Budget next year, will be faced with the necessity of finding additional revenue to the tune of at least £40 millions, and very likely substantially more. We observed further that, in our judgment, this about exhausts the limits of the additional money which can safely be raised during the present Parliament, at any rate by the method of direct taxation. And we concluded that it was a very serious state of affairs that the financial resources, prudently open to the present Parliament, should already have been mortgaged for purposes which are entirely unconstructive and unproductive in their character.

Now, in writing thus, we are, we believe, writing very moderately. So far from seeking to lay the dark colours on thick, we are conscious rather, at every point of our diagnosis, of exercising considerable restraint; and we are convinced that the misgivings we have expressed are shared to the full by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and by every man of sense in the present Government who is in touch with the realities of the financial position. But, of course, very few, even among intelligent and well-informed people, have given their minds seriously to the practical problem of next year's Budget; and most members of the Labour Party, even those of moderate opinions, seem to us to be living in a Fool's Paradise. Holding a general belief (which we share) in the two-fold policy of the graduated taxation of wealth on the one hand and the provision of social services on the other, they have no inkling of the very real dangers of pushing that policy much further at the present time; and they still think it sufficient to say with a facile plausibility: "Can we afford it? Of course we can. We are a rich country, with plenty of rich people to tax. We can afford anything which we really want to do." Such a mood must lead sooner or later to disillusionment; and the earlier the process of disillusionment begins the better for everyone.

The yield of super-tax last year was £56 millions. (It will probably be a good deal less in the current year.) Let us set that figure against the £40 millions, or more, which Mr. Snowden will have to find next April. If Mr. Snowden were to attempt to meet his coming deficit entirely by means of super-tax, he would have practically to double the rates of tax. No one, we imagine, will suggest that this would be feasible. The super-tax is already stiff and steeply graduated, beginning at the income-limit of £2,000 a year, and ranging from a rate of 9d. to one of 6s. in the £, payable, of course, on the top of income tax. The notion of doubling such a tax is clearly utterly chimerical. But another fact must be borne in mind, which makes it very dangerous to raise the super-tax at all. The yield of super-tax has been declining steadily, substantially, and ominously in recent years. The significance of this decline is clear. The practice of evading or avoiding super-tax is becoming increasingly widespread. There are all sorts of entirely legitimate ways by which super-tax can be avoided, if the motive for doing so is strong enough; and it is idle to suppose that it is possible to stop them up effectively by *ad hoc* legislation. There is an obvious danger that even a mild increase in the rates of super-tax would give a powerful stimulus to the practice of evasion. It is a wise financial maxim that you should beware of increasing the rate of tax on any source of revenue which is showing a declining yield.

In our judgment, therefore, Mr. Snowden will be well advised not to touch super-tax at all. In any case, it is clear that he can hope for very little from this source, and that, if he has to find £40 millions in his next Budget, and limits himself mainly to direct taxation, his main reliance must be upon the ordinary income tax. Now it would require an addition of at least 8d. to the standard rate of income tax to bring in £40 millions in a full year of operation; and, of course, Mr. Snowden will only get the benefit in his next Budget of a half-year's yield of any increase he imposes. If he were to increase the income tax by as much as 1s. in the £, this would only bring him next year about £30 millions, and he would still have to raise a considerable sum in other ways to make ends meet. If he were content with 6d., he would have to lean heavily next year on indirect taxes, a course which would be repugnant to his principles and extremely distasteful to the Labour Party. We suggest, therefore, that we have to reckon very seriously with the possibility of a 1s. on the income tax in the next Budget, not standing alone, but supplemented by, say, some addition to the death duties and some new miscellaneous imposts. It is true that this would give Mr. Snowden a substantial margin in subsequent years with which to meet the rising tide of social expenditure, and this consideration has some reassuring value in connection with the argument that follows.

We do not suggest that there is anything necessarily or inherently disastrous in the difference between a 4s. and a 5s. income tax. Most of the arguments which stress the damage done by high direct taxation to industry and enterprise are, we believe, essentially fallacious. If no one was in the least apprehensive that taxation would be increased any further, the burden of a 5s. income tax is one which, we believe, could easily be borne without any serious repercussions, detrimental to the national well-being—though not, of course, without considerable soreness on the part of those who would have to bear it for the sake of nothing better than a miscellany of such uninspiring trivialities as the raising of unemployment pay and the granting of pensions to widows who *ex hypothesi* are of working age and have no children to support. But the question assumes an altogether different aspect if taxpayers are fearful that the end has not been reached, but that there may be something more on next year, and more again the year after; if they are persuaded, in short, that increased taxation has become the order of the day, and may go to almost any lengths. In that case, the repercussions of the next Budget may be very serious indeed, and, what is more, very speedy in their operation. The man who makes light of them is either ignorant and irresponsible, or is burying his head in the sand.

We must return at this point to the phenomenon of tax evasion or avoidance. At present its commonest form is the creation of trusts, by which a rich man parts with the legal ownership of a portion of his capital in favour of his children or relations. In this case, the Inland Revenue loses in super-tax, but that is all; no loss of national income is involved. But there is a form of tax avoidance which, if it were to develop on a big scale, would be immeasurably more formidable, namely, residence abroad. The number of British persons who, stimulated mainly or largely by the taxation motive, are domiciled beyond the reach of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is already by no means negligible. The practice, it should be observed, is not confined to wealthy persons of the super-tax paying class. It extends to comparatively small rentiers who are thinking only of the income tax. Now, when a



man goes abroad to avoid taxation, the State loses all the revenue it at present gets from him—income tax as well as super-tax, the duties on his tobacco, his wine, and his motor-car. But that is not all. The national income is reduced thereby. He may own overseas investments, the income from which has hitherto helped us in the balance of international payments, tending to support the sterling exchange, and contributing to the means by which, as a people, we pay for our food and raw materials. In future, his income will tell the other way.

The practice of moving abroad to escape taxation has not gone very far as yet; nor do we think it likely to go very far, so long as nothing is done to give the rentier classes an acute feeling of insecurity. But who feels confident that it would not acquire a greatly increased momentum if apprehensions were to be widely and seriously entertained that taxation in Great Britain was going up and up, more or less indefinitely? We put the question in that form: Who feels confident that it would not? because it is not necessary that such a movement should actually develop. If such a movement appears probable or even likely, trouble begins to arise at once.

Before a man moves abroad to escape taxation, before he definitely makes up his mind to do so, before he has got much further than a vague feeling that, if things go on like this, he may do so one day, he is apt to do something else. He is apt to put his money, or a large part of it, abroad, by way of preparation or precaution. And if a sufficient number of people are doing this, others are apt to follow suit, merely as a matter of prudent investment, because the situation threatens a steady decline in the value of British securities. The result, in other words, is apt to be a "flight from the pound," serious in proportion to the seriousness of the apprehensions about high taxation. At the present time, with the foreign exchange position precarious for quite other reasons, such as the repatriation of French balances, we can ill sustain even the mildest flight from the pound. Quite a mild flight would entail a series of reactions, higher Bank rate, slackened trade, increased unemployment, which would serve to defeat the purpose of the increased taxation and to make the Budget deficit larger than before. There is always the danger that the movement might gain a gathering momentum and develop into a real *dégringolade*.

These are dangers which we believe to be latent in the Budget situation which confronts Mr. Snowden. To avert them it is essential, in our judgment, that he should be able to convince the public that the increased taxation he imposes does not represent the first instalment of an indefinite series of increases, but rather a temporary reversion, under the pressure of unfortunate circumstances, to an abnormally high level of taxation, from which some relief can be expected fairly confidently in the future. We do not doubt that Mr. Snowden will endeavour to represent matters in this light, and in some respects he is strongly placed for doing so. It is quite true that he finds himself this year in a position of exceptional difficulty. A large part of the deficit which faces him is attributable, as we pointed out last week, not to the commitments of the present Government, but to Mr. Churchill's improvidence. Moreover, whatever taxes Mr. Snowden decides to impose, it is almost certain that they will be such as will yield a larger revenue in the following year, so that he will have a sufficient margin in prospect to finance the binding commitments of the Government to further expenditure under such heads as the raising of the school age.

But such facts, together with all the personal assurances which it is in Mr. Snowden's power to give, will not carry conviction, unless the Labour Party as a whole modify the ideas about future social expenditure which at present they so clamorously proclaim. It is the reverse of helpful to Mr. Snowden when Mr. Shaw, in defending the Unemployment Insurance Bill, asserts heatedly that the increase in the scale of benefits represents only a very modest instalment of what the Government want to do, mean to do, and indeed would do at this moment if only they had a majority in the House of Commons. Almost every Minister, in introducing almost every Bill, speaks after this fashion. It is done, of course, to placate the rank and file. But the Labour rank and file, and, we daresay, some of the Ministers too, need to-day not so much to be placated as to be educated.

We have laid stress in the foregoing analysis on the danger of a flight from the pound, because that, we believe, is the way in which the consequences of imprudent taxation would most immediately make themselves felt. But behind that there is, of course, a more fundamental factor. We live in an age of international tendency, of highly developed international communications, of international travel, of international trusts, of a projected International Bank, of international groupings and *camaraderies* of every sort and description. The power of all organizations resting on a purely national basis, including national Governments, is necessarily limited by this tendency; and in most connections no one is quicker than the Socialist to point this out. No one, for example, argues more insistently that the coal problem is an international problem and can only be solved satisfactorily by international agreement. No one lays more stress—as we are disposed to think, undue stress—on the importance of the work of the International Labour Office. In most connections, in short, no one recognizes more clearly the need for some degree of conformity between the practice of different nations. Now this need for some degree of international conformity does not disappear when we come to taxation. Just as with hours and wages, it is difficult to move very far in advance of the prevailing practice of other countries in the taxation of wealth.

We have already, of course, gone a long way in advance of other countries in this matter, as in others. Is it surprising that it should be really difficult and dangerous to go much further? The a priori justice or injustice of redistributing wealth by taxing the rich for the benefit of the poor is beside the point. The point is the power of the national State. In the modern world the national State is not omnipotent, and there are limits to its power to remould the structure of its domestic society without reference to what is happening in the world outside. The large majority of rentiers are willing to pay a large "ransom," to use Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's old phrase, rather than take themselves off to a strange land. But the hold over them possessed by the national State is not absolute, and it is dangerous to speak and reason as though it were.

There is, we believe, no escape from the conclusion that we should eschew for the time being measures which are primarily redistributive in character, and concentrate our energies for the next few years on the attempt to restore and improve our national productivity. This is a conclusion which is necessarily extremely unpalatable to the Labour Party. Yet perhaps they are not quite so far from accepting it as appearances suggest.



## THE QUESTION OF TRANSFER PRICES IN THE COAL INDUSTRY

IT is very right and proper that all our discussions of various aspects of the coal problem should constantly be turning back, as they do, to the key factor, "the economic capacity of the industry." If any proposal is made that the industry should pay wages, or dividends, in excess of its economic capacity, such a proposal must be, to put it mildly, backed by very special reasons as to why one industry should be picked out from all the others to receive assistance at their expense, whether in the form of a subsidy from the Exchequer or in the subtler form of statutory permission to charge monopoly prices. So much is common ground among serious economists of all political views. But it is precisely for this reason that it is so essential that we should frame our opinions of the economic capacity of the industry on the basis of accurate and unbiased statistics. As a matter of fact it is on the official quarterly statements of the Ministry of Mines that the prevalent opinion of the low economic capacity of the industry is based. For every quarter since 1927, taking the industry as a whole, a substantial loss has been returned for Great Britain and for practically every one of its component districts, with the single exception of the first quarter of 1929: and the returns for the second quarter of 1920, just published, show that the industry is again being carried on at a loss. These quarterly statements are the aggregate of the trading accounts, certified jointly by the miners' and owners' accountants, for the purpose of determining wages under the method laid down by the famous profit-sharing agreement of 1921, reached after the big dispute of that year. There is neither space nor need to describe in full the terms of this agreement or the modifications introduced in 1924 and 1926. Those who are familiar with the complex procedure laid down will agree that the following are the essential principles:—

(i) The accountants shall certify proceeds of sales, and costs other than wages or interest, and divide the difference between profits and wages on agreed principles.

(ii) Profits of associated concerns such as coke-ovens, steel-works, and brick-kilns, or selling agencies owned by the colliery company, shall not be brought within the scope of the ascertainment.

(iii) However low the certified proceeds fall, wages shall not fall below an agreed minimum percentage addition to pre-war rates.

(iv) Provided, however, that if the owners have to make up the ascertained wage in accordance with this previous clause, they shall be entitled to recover such payments from any future surplus before any of it can be devoted to raising wages above the minimum.

When in addition it is realized that except for a brief interlude in 1927, wages in nearly all districts have been "on the minimum" since 1924, in spite of a reduction of about 10 per cent. in the minimum rates in 1926, and that the total of deficiencies to be charged against any future surplus is steadily mounting, it will be seen that it is very much in the owners' interest that the proceeds of the industry should not be overstated, very much in the miners' that they should not be understated. This is precisely the *raison d'être* of the joint accountants.

Some years back the miners suggested that the owners deliberately understated the proceeds of the industry by the simple expedient of transferring coal to associated concerns or agencies, or selling it to concerns in which they had interests at prices below those ruling in the open market. This accusation was examined by the Samuel Commission of 1925-6, of which more presently. For some

reason, since that date the subject has disappeared from current controversy.

There is quite a simple statistical test which we can apply to examine the truth of this assertion. We can compile an index number to show the changes in prices received for coal sold in the open market. We can compile another index number to show the average proceeds per ton returned in the wage-ascertainments. If the practice of transferring coal at artificially low prices has been increasing during recent years, this will show itself in the latter index number falling below the former. Following the practice of the Board of Trade, we may take 1924 as the base year for our index numbers, as being the first normal post-war year. Anyone familiar with recent economic history will recognize that for the coal industry at any rate each of the previous years was quite exceptional. The "ascertained prices" index is calculated direct from the quarterly ascertainments: the "market prices" index from the quotations of some fifteen leading varieties of coal in principal centres. The quotations are taken from the IRON AND COAL TRADES REVIEW. In order to forestall technical criticism it may be added that this is a geometric index, spliced in 1927 to a Board of Trade index whose publication commenced in that year. The figures come out as follows:—

	1924.	1925.	1927.	1928.	1929.
Market Prices	100.0	85.0	i-vi. 83.7	i-vi. 77.2	i-vi. 75.8
Ascertainment Prices	100.0	86.5	82.0	70.6	67.3
				67.1	69.8

Thus after lagging a little during the rapid slump of 1925 ascertainment prices fell below market prices in 1927, and since then they have been showing an ever-widening disparity. Of the rise in market prices during the last twelve months very little has been reflected in the ascertainments. Before any argument can be based upon these figures, it is necessary to take account of one factor which is relevant to the comparison. Market prices include certain elements of cost, such as railway rates and other transport charges, which are excluded from the ascertainment figures. Some of these charges have increased since 1924, while others have remained stationary. For this reason one would expect market prices to show a smaller percentage decline than ascertainment prices. But this consideration cannot account for so large a disparity as is revealed by the above figures. It might possibly account for a disparity of about 3 per cent., leaving one of over 6 per cent. still to be explained.

Now, of course, nobody will take this single demonstration as a proof of the whole case, that transfer prices are artificially rigged to the detriment of the miners. It is conceivable that this disparity may be due to a large change in the average quality of coal sold during the last few years. But it is incumbent upon anyone who wishes to support this view to produce some evidence for it, of which there is none at present, or some other hypothesis which shall fairly account for the facts outlined above.

We may now turn to the report of the Samuel Commission. Reporting on the period 1924-5, they doubted, on general grounds, the existence of any considerable amount of under-statement. On the other hand, they published in an annex a statement showing the prices paid for coal by coke-ovens, which established a presumption, at any rate, that they were getting their coal below market price. In order that the matter might be placed above all suspicion they made certain recommendations on this matter, particularly that instead of accepting the owner's entries of transfer prices, subject to challenge by the miners' accountant, the accountants for each district should appoint an arbitrator, who should declare monthly the current market prices for each grade of coal, and that these figures should

always be used for calculating transfer prices. These suggestions have ostentatiously not been carried out.

We may turn to the minutes of evidence of the examination of the representatives of the owners' and miners' accountants, Sir William McLintock and Mr. Gordon. They described the procedure by which the owners entered figures and the accountants sometimes challenged them. Sir William McLintock said that they rarely had to raise them more than a few pence per ton. Mr. Gordon reminded him of cases of disparities of 8s. 6d. a ton. They also described how owners "justified" prices below market prices allowed to certain customers by pointing out that they were large buyers or for similar reasons. Sir William Beveridge inquired if the accountants were satisfied that there was no misstatement, not so much of price, as of quality. The reply was that generally they simply accepted the owners' statements of the quality of the coal: they admitted, at any rate, that it was subject only to "their own inexperienced criticism."

Whether we argue *a priori* from the situation revealed by the evidence, or from the actual facts of the price statistics, there seems to be a case which demands an authoritative reply or explanation. And if such an explanation is not forthcoming there should be no need to stress the necessity of overhauling the whole procedure as an integral part of any scheme of reform for the coal industry.

C. G. CLARK.

## PARLIAMENTARY NOTES

THE Third Reading of the Pensions Bill brought no new developments, but, as these notes are concerned with the actors rather than with the plot of the political drama, the speech of Mr. Frank Smith, of Nuneaton, may be given a paragraph all to itself. Here we have a Socialist of the Jurassic period, but by no means a fossil. One could figure him hanging on the words of William Morris in the barn at Hammersmith, and going out to spread the gospel—not yet a fashionable fad or a vague proletarian excitement—in the face of the hostility or indifference of Hyde Park. Now, after many years, he finds himself, with mingled pride and bewilderment, supporting a Socialist Government in the House of Commons. There is a measure of disillusionment in this success, but Mr. Smith has charity (comic, pathetic, or sublime, according to taste), which includes not only the widow and the orphan and "honourable gentlemen opposite who grunt," but even his own Front Bench. Naively he implored the House not to shoot the artists who were doing their best. And the shade of Sir John Falstaff echoed down the ages: "Tut, tut; good enough to toss; food for powder, food for powder; they'll fill a pit as well as better; tush, man, mortal men, mortal men." Mr. Smith lacks the girth of Sir John, but he is a gallant figure. May his red flag never grow pink!

Private members made good use of their time on Wednesday by calling attention to the troubles of the fishing industry (Sir Robert Hamilton), and the danger of timber shortage (Sir G. Courthope). Recent disasters made it easy for Sir Robert to gain the sympathetic attention of the House. The second debate was also interesting, and I think that it is an advantage that the Forestry Commissioners are now represented by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade instead of by a private member.

On Friday the Musical Copyright Bill occupied too much time. I am not suggesting that it is unimportant, but the issues could have been much more briefly defined. The promoters, who represented "consumers" of music in general, commanded the general sympathy of the House, but the spokesmen of the Performing Rights Society were able to indicate formidable legal difficulties, consideration

of which resulted in the Bill being sent to a Select Committee on the suggestion of Sir Herbert Samuel. No assistance was forthcoming from the Law Officers to indicate whether the legal obstacles are, as Mr. Stuart Bevan suggested, insurmountable.

One result of this lengthy debate was to kill the chances of Sir Archibald Sinclair's Bill to give security of tenure to Scottish Crofters. The short time available rendered Mr. MacRobert's labour of love in talking out the measure an easy one. Speaking as he did from the front Opposition Bench, he presumably had the authority of the Conservative Party behind him, and they must bear the whole responsibility for blocking this useful proposal upon no better grounds than that the grievance proposed to be remedied had arisen out of the defective phraseology of a Liberal Act.

From Pensions, we must pass to Unemployment Insurance, and on Thursday Miss Bondfield asked a Second Reading for her Bill in a lucid and businesslike speech, which only lost its full effect because she chose to read every word of it. One expects statistics to be read, or official pronouncements on vital points where every word must be weighed; but a whole speech treated in this manner is something of a bromide. Major Walter Elliot followed with his soothing voice like "the cooing of doves in immemorial elms," and made some good points, particularly in ridiculing the proposed test of diligence in "genuinely seeking work." Then came Mr. Lloyd George, and the whole House responded to the master's touch. He put the Bill in its proper perspective in relation to the effort or lack of effort of the Lord Privy Seal on the one hand, and the rapidly growing total of Government commitments on the other. His speech was full, as Mr. Maxton put it, of humour and good humour, and set the right note for the searching examination to which this important measure must be subjected.

Mr. Maxton himself was hardly at his brilliant best, and one suspected that someone in authority had been pouring cold water on his fireworks, so as to make them splutter. There are two Maxtons. The one is dignified and economical of gesture; relying for emphasis mainly on the modulations of his magnificent voice; and only occasionally marking a key-point by bending forward a gaunt form and extending a minatory forefinger. The House of Commons has nothing better to show. But the Maxton we heard on Thursday twisted uneasily from side to side, contorted his face, wrung his hands, and too frequently smote his left palm with his right fist. This is a performance which he only does better than other people who do it badly, and with such meretricious aids he failed to make his points with his usual distinction.

Of the other speakers, Mr. Hayday spoke with authority as one of the signatories to the Minority Report of the Morris Commission, and Mr. Graham White supported that Report from the Liberal Benches in a speech which was not only excellent in form, but of the highest interest as indicating probable developments in the Committee stage. Liberal members representing industrial constituencies will probably agree with him that the Government's substitute for the old "genuinely seeking work" test is so far from being too indulgent to the unemployed that it actually reproduces the worst hardships of the existing regulations. The Labour Left Wing presumably agree, and, if Major Elliot was not making mere debating points, his mind also is moving in the same direction. So there may be some curious cross-voting. But, why not, if we are to be a Council of State?

On the second day, Sir Robert Aske carried on the good work of Mr. Graham White, and denounced both the existing regulations and those proposed in the Bill as "an industrial treadmill subjecting the unemployed to an endless round of useless effort." Mr. Oliver Stanley made the best speech delivered from his side in this Parliament.



and is clearly a force to be reckoned with; but if, as it would appear, the Tories are trying to show that they can do without Winston, the demonstration has not, on the whole, been very convincing. Mr. George Buchanan was vigorous and effective, but inclined to overdo the personal touch. Mr. Tom Shaw, in an illuminating sentence, coupled together the ostensible reason for refusing the Maxton scale and the real one. The former was, of course, "office without power"; the latter, that the scale would in some cases make relief higher than wages. "You should have thought of that before you published your programme," growled the Pirate King amid loud Opposition cheers.

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On the financial resolution, Sir E. Hilton Young roamed far and wide over the economic field. When Socialist inter-rupters tempted him with conundrums about "a man on an island," a late sitting became inevitable, for any well-trained economist will follow that scent across half a country. Mr. Ben Tillett answered him—"the incoherent following the incomprehensible" was one lobby description. I would prefer to put it that these two speakers are on different economic planes, and can never meet, however far they produce themselves in any direction. About midnight, Colonel Moore rose and tried to tell the Committee an anecdote about his bulldog which was coldly received. Undeterred by this lack of interest in pets, he went on to liken the Labour Party to a guinea-pig. But this was felt to be an inapt comparison, for the guinea-pig notoriously has no tail.

ERIMUS.

## "IMMORAL BIRTH-PREVENTION"

### I.

**T**O-DAY "the real issue between moral self-control and immoral self-gratification is forgotten and ignored," lamented Cardinal Bourne in his inaugural address to the Ninth National Catholic Conference at Westminster this year. "Analyze," he continued in persuasive tones, "all the motives that are set forth by earnest, well-meaning, and—I would fain believe—conscientious men, the hard cases which they so pathetically quote. . . . They all come to the same thing—the cry of the instinct for self-gratification, and the proclaiming of the impossibility of self-control." The Cardinal then warned a closely packed audience, representing two million English Roman Catholics, against "the evils of immoral birth-prevention." He pleaded with them that there should be no more "silly prating" about "to the pure all things are pure." "So often," he complained, "books and sermons on marriage are occupied chiefly with divorce and with birth-control; and very little more is said to the young mother than that she must *not* practise birth-control and must *not* be divorced. The *shall not*s at this time of danger" (these italics are mine) "are so much louder than the beatitudes." In solemn and big-sounding platitudes he then set out to urge his two million followers "to think of married life as their probable state, as a great mission full of possibilities—a vocation in every sense of the word." "The young," the Cardinal continued in a tone of authoritative conviction, "will respond to the attraction of the heroic ideal if it is put before them in all its glory. And," he added, "many, both men and women, have to be heroic or lost to the Church in this critical time."

These high-sounding platitudes represent the blessings of an ideal life as seen through the spectacles of a Roman Catholic Cardinal. The gravamen of his charges and exhortations is that, though there may be some appearance of justification for birth-control knowledge in exceptional circumstances, the ordinary man and woman would be better

off without such knowledge. Let us agree, then, to ignore the "hard cases," and meet the Cardinal on the ground which he selects.

An American report, by isolating various causal factors in infant mortality, has succeeded incidentally in putting the personal case for birth-control on another plane than the interest of self-gratification, upon that, namely, of an interest in the health of the "average" mother and her children. Four years ago Dr. R. M. Woodbury, the director of Statistical Research in the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labour in Washington, published a report on Infant Mortality based upon investigations carried out, between 1911 and 1916, by American field research workers who made house-to-house visits in Baltimore and seven smaller American industrial cities. These workers collected almost every kind of information relating to the chances of survival of children within twelve months after birth. The results of their inquiries were finally collated with census statistics. The results so reached bring together for the first time information about the health of the mother and child, the period of occupation of the mother before and after child-birth, the condition of the home, and the income of the father, in circumstances in which no plea can be made that the cases considered are merely exceptional.

### II.

Dr. Woodbury's analysis of the statistics of high infant mortality rates proved that they occurred in almost every circumstance in which an advocate of birth-control would expect them to occur. For the whole of the eight towns considered, the average infant mortality rate was 111.2 per 1,000 births. It was found to be lowest from all causes among Jewish mothers (53.5) and highest (215.9) in families in which the father's earnings did not bring in more than 450 dollars a head per year for each member of the family.

It will be useful in the first place to limit a survey of Dr. Woodbury's analysis to those circumstances in which the health of the mother and her disposition towards her child were obviously a principal control factor. In all there were 22,967 births whose history was recorded in the statistics. Of these, the infant mortality rate was below the average (101.4) for mothers who were aged between twenty-five and twenty-nine, and again below the average (104.7) for mothers who were between thirty and thirty-four. When the mother was either older or younger than the gap between these ages the infant mortality rate rose steadily, until the figures for children who were born fifth and later in order to mothers who were forty showed that only 14.4 per cent. of those born survived—and in so far as the fifth child was concerned the rate was not much lower for mothers between thirty-five and thirty-nine, for of these children only 31.5 per cent. survived.

A marked improvement in the chances of the child's survival was found when the interval between the birth recorded and the previous birth was either two or three years. In the former case the infant mortality rate was 86.5 and in the latter case 98.2. But when, however, the interval between the pregnancies was confined to one year or less the mortality rates rose with a startling deadliness—indeed, in those cases in which the interval was one year or less the infant mortality rate was as high as 146.7.

When the grouping was arranged according to the manner in which the mothers fed their children it was found that, if the figures were limited to the first nine months only, the infant mortality rate "for the partly breast-fed averaged about twice as high as that for the wholly breast-fed. For the same period the mortality among the babies who were exclusively artificially fed averaged about three times as high as that among the partly breast-fed."

When the history of the infants was examined according to another element in the prospect of their survival, a point very pertinent to the main argument of this article was discovered. The highest infant mortality rates according to nationality of the mother—higher even than that of the negro population—were to be found among Roman



Catholic races—the Portuguese (200.3), the French Canadians (171.3), and the Poles (157.2). Anyone who wishes to test the full significance of such figures should compare the infant mortality rates in Lisbon, Warsaw, or Glasgow with other infant mortality rates in cities in which the Roman Catholic population is known to be small.

On the basis of these figures it can scarcely be denied that the health of a mother and her disposition towards the survival of her child appear to be important factors in controlling the infant mortality rate. For the children who stand most chance of survival are clearly seen to be those who are born (a) to mothers between the ages of twenty-four and thirty-five; (b) to mothers who preserve an interval of at least two years between their pregnancies; and (c) to mothers who space their families in such a way that they are free and healthy enough to breast-feed their children over a period of nine months.

### III.

When regarded from another standpoint the report brings out the fact that people in squalid circumstances, particularly poor Roman Catholics, from whom knowledge of the means by which they can space their families is withheld, try to breed with a rapidity and disregard for their own welfare or the prospective welfare of their children which is difficult to describe without personal experience of the conditions in which they live. "The low-earnings group," states the report in the section which relates infant mortality to the wages of the father, "included a disproportionate number of infants of orders fifth and later; of those born to mothers under twenty years, or thirty-five years and later; and of those whose mothers became pregnant during the infant's first year of life." As one would expect, the lowest in the low-earning groups were the Roman Catholics—the Poles, the Portuguese, and the Italians—who were also those who endeavoured to breed most rapidly; indeed, the report states that among them and among the French Canadians was found the largest weighting of the children fifth in the family.

R. G. RANDALL.

## LIFE AND POLITICS

THE practical obstacle to the Council of State or all-party approach to the unemployment problem is, of course, that the Conservatives will have nothing to do with it. They are far too much absorbed in the old party game of watching the other side for the chance of catching them out in some really unpopular mistake. All the same, the general sentiment in favour of treating unemployment policy as a national emergency calling for the suspension of merely party manoeuvres has grown steadily in strength since I last wrote. Mr. Lloyd George's frank and friendly speech last week has had the wholesome effect of forcing the Government to face the fact that the sham solution of tinkering with benefits is not good enough, and will simply plunge the country still deeper in the slough of despond. Ministers know this well enough, and they are approaching a condition of irritated despair, in which they may well be willing to swallow some of their party pride. The tone of Mr. Shaw's speech was very significant. He got so far as to welcome the offer of Liberal assistance in working out practical schemes for finding work: a very big advance. The way is now clear for co-operation in some form. The history of this interesting movement shows that it springs from what is best and most generous in the mind of Progressives. The suggestion was first thrown out in a MANCHESTER GUARDIAN leader; it was cordially recommended by the wife of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, approved by Mr. Lloyd George, and has been since "run" enthusiastically in the DAILY NEWS. Mr. MacDonald was carefully friendly, and now, in precise obedience to the growth of popular approval, and urged on by the

sad realization of the inadequacy of the Thomas-cum-Bondfield attack, the Government, and many of its supporters in the House are beginning to think that there may be something in it.

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The weakness of Labour in the House of Lords is a matter of serious concern to the Cabinet. Ways and means of increasing the present quite inadequate representation there are constantly under discussion in the Labour Party. The knowledge that this is so no doubt encouraged the circulation by one of the less responsible papers of the story that the New Year's Honours list will include the appointment of a number of Labour men as life Peers. The story is certainly untrue. It is perfectly well established that life peerages cannot be created by the Royal prerogative. Legislation is necessary, and no legislation has been announced, or could be introduced without challenging the House of Lords to a fight to the death. The Lords would resist such an invasion of its privileges with all their remaining strength, for it would mean robbing them of their last shred of obstructive power. The creation of a block of life Peers would amount to a constitutional revolution, and the Lords would be on as strong ground in resisting it as they would ever be in resisting anything, for in this matter, the House of Lords is a law unto itself, or rather, it makes its own law. Some Labour people are ready for the challenge, considering that it might be good election business to raise the Peers *versus* People issue again. However that may be, it is obvious that the Government is suffering severely from the inadequacy of their team in the Lords. They have not more than half a dozen competent debaters there—Labour is, of course, in a far worse position even than the Liberal Party in the Lords—and I believe that before very long the balance of parties in the Lords will have to be rectified as part of a comprehensive scheme of reform.

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The Tory Party Conference was, by all accounts, a singularly dismal affair. There was not even the redeeming excitement of a good row, such as had been promised in the livelier section of the Tory Press. The anticipated attack upon the Central Office for its alleged bungling of the General Election fizzled ingloriously out. When the delegates were faced with the issue they sneaked away from it. They had not the heart for anything except a little conventional abuse of the Government over Russia, and the usual pathetic enthusiasm for Protection. The weakness of the Conservative Conference is that it collects together the least intelligent members of the party. They pass a swarm of forcible-feeble resolutions which, fortunately for the party, are quietly ignored by the official leaders. Otherwise the state of the Tory Party would be even more wretched than it is. The Conference showed that there is very little desire in the rank and file for internal reform, or for that democratization of leadership which is advocated as the only hope of a revival. The bright young Tories were pointedly cold-shouldered. In the light of this dreary gathering, one cannot but admire the fine perseverance of Mr. Garvin in advising the Conservatives to renew their strength by a move towards the Liberals. The note of the Conference was a violent hostility to Liberals and Liberalism. The Tories are at the moment without a policy, and there is no fight in them. They are still in the unhappy position of believing in one thing only, Protection, well knowing that they dare not commit themselves to it, lest even worse befall.

\* \* \*

Social workers are by no means easy in mind about the new unemployment benefit for boys of fifteen. This is

especially the case with those who have most knowledge of the conditions of juvenile employment in London. The point of view in South Wales, for example, with its mass of stagnant and hopeless unemployment, is naturally different. In London, as is well known, there is scarcely any unemployment among boys; in some of the industrial districts the demand by employers for boys between fourteen and sixteen is already greater than the supply, and the demand is likely to increase in the next few years, owing to the effect of the diminished birth-rate during the war, and owing, of course, to the raising of the school age. These and similar considerations lead Mr. Frank Briant, that excellent Liberal, a man who speaks with great authority on the subject, to doubt whether there is any need for bringing boys into the scheme at all. If this is to be done, it is most necessary, in Mr. Briant's opinion, that the payment of the benefit should be made strictly dependent upon attendance at training classes. Experience shows that the average boy leaving school thinks first of all about the money he is going to get as the incentive to work—that is only natural, and no libel on the nature of boys. If there is the prospect of getting even so small a sum as six shillings a week for not working, there is good reason to fear that a great deal of work-dodging will result. Such criticisms sound harsh, but they are grounded on first-hand knowledge of the facts, and those who make them are fully alive to the evils of work-dodging in the more favoured social classes. I agree with Mr. Briant that, if the State had money to spare (which it has not) it would be better, instead of putting boys on the dole, to give a little more to the older people, and especially to divert it to old age pensions for workers who leave the labour market at the end rather than the beginning of life.

Like Sidney Smith and other famous wits, Clemenceau had many stories fathered upon him. The genuine Clemenceau witticism is marked by a sort of genial blasphemy. Of such are the remark about "Le Bon Dieu" and the Fourteen Points, and the description of President Wilson as "talking like Jesus Christ and acting like Lloyd George." Perhaps I may add one more to the stories that have swarmed in the papers this week. It has the merit of being true, and also shows that the fierce old man could be humorous as well as witty. At one of the committees of the Peace Conference they were discussing at what hour to meet on the next day. Signor Tittoni asked that the hour should not be too early as he liked to rest after lunch. Mr. Lansing asked that it should not be too late as he liked to rest before tea. Mr. Balfour made no suggestion. Clemenceau decided on three-thirty. "Signor Tittoni can then have his rest before the meeting, Mr. Lansing his after the meeting, and Mr. Balfour can, as usual, sleep while the meeting is going on."

Le plus ça change, &c.—While reading the fascinating account of the conversations of Napoleon with Sir Pulteney Malcolm at St. Helena, my attention paused over the following: "Bonaparte said that if he had won the battle (Waterloo) there would have been a change of Ministers in England, and they would have made peace with him. The Admiral said he did not think so, because whatever men were Ministers they generally acted the same, we were not to judge of them by their railing in opposition. Bonaparte said he believed that to be the case; that he remembered to have heard a story of a leader of Opposition making a violent speech when a change of Ministry was

expected. A Minister called out: 'Take care what you say—you may be in the majority to-morrow.'"

\* \* \*

Ring up the Editor of THE NATION the other day, I was given a wrong number. "Is that THE NATION?" I asked. "No," said a voice, "only a small part of it."

KAPPA.

## "ANGELS AND MINISTERS OF GRACE DEFEND US!"

"If the Archangel Gabriel led the Conservative Party, he would be subjected to criticism."

Sir W. Ray, at the Conservative Conference.

THE Tories held a Conference: a deal of mud was stirred. The Angel Gabriel listened in, and this was what he heard:—

—Our candidates have lots of cash, but very little knowledge;

They can't compete with Socialists brought up at Ruskin College;

Their credits may be stronger, but their arguments are weaker

(Cries of dissent, attributing mere "drivel" to the speaker).

—Our only chance is, once again, to set the Russian butt up,

And tell the Moscow "crooks and cads" to "own up, pay up, shut up"

(Amendment moved—the mover's voice is drowned by cat-calls hearty,

For "shut up" stands for logic with the Gentlemanly Party).

—Our leaders have lost touch with us; they utter mere verbosity.

If the great "manipulator of municipal monstrosities,"

Or our "brick-layer and Chancellor" would, waiving all formalities,

But "breathe the Conference atmosphere" we'd nail them to realities.

—"Damp rot" corrodes our energies; the fighting spirit's lacking.

—Our band of Free Trade heretics should all be sent a-packing.

—We must educate the folk to see cheap food is an illusion.

—"Bamboozle" sounds more accurate (No! No! and much confusion).

—Our methods reek of Tammany, with autocratic bosses; We haven't got a policy, and that explains our losses.

We won on the Red Letter by a "fluke," but broke our pledges,

And we cannot keep supporters, while the Party trims and hedges.

—We have too many, like "wild dogs," within our ranks depleted,

Whose habit is to "bite their friends" whenever we're defeated.

Were Gabriel's self to lead us on, to show how much you prize him,

You'd carp, and cavil, and intrigue, and roundly criticize him.

The Angel heard—and Heaven's high hall was rocked from floor to rafter

By devastating gust on gust of archangelic laughter.

MACFLECKNOE.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA

SIR,—In your issue of the 16th you publish a letter from Sir N. Grattan-Doyle which has been broadcast through the Press, and in which he seeks to show that the new 14th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* has been unduly Americanized. Before dealing with the specific case to which he refers I must ask you to allow me to make a comment on the general charge—viz., that the new *Britannica* "could be more appropriately designated the *Encyclopædia Americana*." If Sir Grattan-Doyle means that to be entitled to the term "*Britannica*" it should be written entirely by British writers from a British point of view for an exclusively British public, the statement is true, but in that sense the statement has always been true. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* has never been an instrument of nationalistic propaganda. Its purpose from its foundation has been to provide: (1) an accurate work of reference dealing with every branch of knowledge; (2) a digest of human history in all its manifestations, and (3) a record of every development of science, art, and culture not in this country only, but in every country.

In the pursuit of these aims it has sought the highest authority on any given subject regardless of his nationality. It has done so in the present case. If Mr. Charles E. Hughes was invited to write on the "Monroe Doctrine," Mr. Kellogg on the "Outlawry of War," and Mr. Henry Ford on "Mass Production," they were invited for precisely the same reason that Herr Einstein was asked to write on "Space-Time," Herr Ludwig on the "Hohenzollerns," and the late Marshal Foch on "Morale in War." They were asked, not because they were Americans, but because they were deemed to be best qualified to write authoritatively on their respective subjects. And that has been the determining consideration throughout.

But that general principle having been followed, it remains indisputable that the overwhelming bulk of the work has been done by British authorities.

The Editor-in-Chief of the New *Britannica* is Mr. J. L. Garvin, the distinguished editor of the *London Observer*, and he has been aided in his great task by a board of thirty associate editors, all of them, with three exceptions, British, and all of them authorities of undeniable repute, including Professor Eddington (Astronomy), Professor J. H. Morgan (Law), Dr. Tovey (Music), Professor Andrade (Physics), Professor Julian Huxley (Biology), the late Sir Theodore Cook (Sport), Mr. Robert Lynd (Literature), and so on. These associate editors were solely responsible for the selection of the contributors to their various sections, and though they made their choice of writers without regard to the question of nationality, they in fact employed British contributors to so large an extent that 80 per cent. of the text is of entirely British authorship.

It is true that Mr. Garvin had associated with him as co-editor Mr. Franklin H. Hooper of New York, who has been continuously connected with the *Britannica* for thirty years, and who was exclusively responsible for contributions on American subjects. But is that fact seriously advanced to the prejudice of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*? The English-speaking world in these days is happily not confined to these islands, and it may reasonably be claimed that in choosing American writers to deal with themes on which their authority is established, it is pursuing a policy in the interests of its readers and in the best traditions of its own past.

This general statement puts the particular case to which Sir Grattan-Doyle refers in its true perspective in relation to the work as a whole. It is inevitable that in certain instances the emphasis should seem to be laid on the activities of one hemisphere or the other. In the majority of cases, e.g., ship-building, coal and coal-mining, steam engines, docks, river engineering, cotton and cotton manufacture, mechanical power transmission, artificial silk, woollen

manufacture, wireless telegraphy, brewing, electrification of industry, and so on, the articles are predominantly British. In the case of the motor industry it is, as Sir Grattan-Doyle says, predominantly American. This is due, not to any policy of Americanization, but to the fact that America has admittedly taken the lead in this industry.—Yours, &c.,

W. H. FRANKS, Managing Director.

For the *Encyclopædia Britannica* Co., Ltd.,  
Imperial House, 80-86, Regent Street, W.1.  
November 21st, 1929.

### DR. BRIDGES AND WAR

SIR,—It always irks me when a reviewer seizes a strong friend to peace and ranges him amongst the defenders of war. This disservice has been rendered by Mr. Read to the Laureate in the interesting review which he contributes to your last issue. "Dr. Bridges in his complacency can even defend modern warfare." Mr. Read then quotes a passage in which the poet suggests what even pacifists admit, viz., that war is an arena wherein "heroism, self-sacrifice, and discipline" are displayed. To describe this as a "defence of modern warfare" is, I submit, a misuse of terms. Mr. Read, however, may prefer his own interpretation. But what can he say of the following?

"Science comforting man's animal poverty  
and leisuring his toil, hath humanized manners  
and social temper, and now above her globe-spread'd net  
of speeded intercourse hath outrun all magic  
and disclosing the secrecy of the reticent air  
hath woven a seamless web of invisible strands  
spiriting the dumb inane with the quick matter of life!  
Now music's prison'd raptur and the drown'd voice of  
truth  
mantled in light's velocity, over land and sea  
are omnipresent, speaking aloud to every ear,  
into every heart and home their unhinder'd message  
the body and soul of Universal Brotherhood;  
whereby war, fallen from savagery to fratricide  
from a trumpeting vainglory to a crying shame,  
stalketh now with blasting curse branded on its brow."

Strange language from a defender of modern warfare! Why, Mr. Norman Angell might print this passage on the title-page of the "Great Illusion."

And even more specifically this "defender of modern warfare" writes thus of the Great War itself:—

"But we who have seen, condemn'd in savage self-defence  
to train our peaceful folk in the instruments of death  
and of massacre and mourning, have suffered four years—  
we have no need to recount in vindication of peace,  
sorrows which no glory of heroism can atone,  
horrors which to forget were cowardice and wrong,  
dishonesty of heart and repudiation of soul."

Mr. Read says that in the poem "war is seen as a 'scourge of God,' a just retribution for 'mankind's crowded uncleanness of soul.'" But Dr. Bridges applies the phrase not to war, but to the pestilences of the Middle Ages, and he quotes it only to repudiate it. Just as the plagues were due to "crowded foulness of their own bodies," so is war due "to mankind's crowded uncleanness of soul," a diagnosis to which Mr. Read may object, but which is scarcely characteristic of one who "defends modern warfare."

Mr. Read is so kind as to head his review "Poet or Pedant?" If this noble poem is pedantry, one may hope that as many as possible of our younger poets may catch the disease from the Old Master.—Yours, &c.,

CHAS. WRIGHT.

### CALDERON'S PLAYS

SIR,—May I ask for some amplification of your surprising note on "Life's a Dream"? It is insufficient to dismiss with a couple of sneers a play which Shelley and Fitzgerald admired sufficiently to translate, though unluckily their translations are only fragmentary. Two of the most impressive theatrical performances I have seen were of plays by Calderon, "Life's a Dream" in French prose at the Atelier Theatre in Paris (on a stage little larger than that of the A.D.C.), and "The Crown of David," in a language of



which I understood nothing, by the Russian Jews of the Habima Theatre. In each case the dramatic genius of Calderon shone blindingly through every veil.—Yours, &c.,

RAYMOND MORTIMER.

Reform Club, S.W.1.

November 10th, 1929.

[Our critic writes: "Shelley and Fitzgerald undoubtedly deserve our thanks for translating, at a time when English drama had almost expired, any play of genuine merit. The point is whether they would have translated it to-day. Is it critical, too, to demand that Kean's magnificent performance as Othello should exempt later performers from the obligation of particular criticism? And an inability, on our part, to enthuse over one performance of a single play surely cannot imply a sneer at a dramatist's collected works."—Ed., NATION.]

### OUR MODERN POETS

SIR,—In the course of a criticism of Thomas Moul's "Best Poems of 1929," your reviewer tells us that there are instances in some of the poems of "overstrain of sense" and "false polish of words." All very true, such instances of unnaturalness do occur, and he proves his condemnation by giving two perfectly obvious examples. But he also says, "we seek poets for their several personalities; we wish to know the author without looking at the signature; but these 'Best Poems' do not reveal any certainty of that sort." Now I could hardly believe my eyes when I read that, for the tongue and brain behind some of these poems are quite unmistakable, so that we knew the author without looking at the signature. For instance, Humbert Wolfe's "Midnight" is unmistakably by Humbert Wolfe. Though a vague, ineffectual poem (but containing some beautiful couplets) it is so unmistakably by Humbert Wolfe that it sounds as if he had sat down to parody all his own defects and excellences and dish up his whole self to us—at the same time hiding a broad grin behind an ecstatic countenance. Take, for instance, only one stanza:—

"Parting is common as death. Why should one phrase  
put out the noise of the world, a word so worn  
that children lisp it, darken all our days,  
and in the night blow loud as Roland's horn."

And though the poem by W. H. Davies does not, for the moment, strike me as being one of his very best, it is so unmistakably by W. H. Davies. For who else could have written:—

"The doors are low and give such narrow space  
We must walk humbly in this little place."

"Six hundred pounds for all this precious stone!  
These little, quaint old windows squinting down?"

And so it is with at least half a dozen other poems in the book. Edmund Blunden's contribution, better, to my mind, than his usual, firmer and more musical than his usual, is unmistakably by Edmund Blunden. And who else but Vachel Lindsay could have written:—

"Do you think boys and girls that I pass on the street,  
More strong than their fathers, more fair than their fathers,  
More clean than their fathers, more wild than their fathers,  
More in love than their fathers, deep in thought not their fathers'.

Are meat for your schemes diabolically neat?

Do you think that all youth is but grist to your mill?"

Who else but Vachel Lindsay could have written it, or, for that matter any other part of the poem! Equally unmistakable also are the notes of Richard Church, Robert Nichols, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Æ. And at the end of the review of that book what cap and bells! For your critic waylays William Plomer, and tells us that this Hogarth Poet is so individual that, by the side of him, none of the modern poets shepherded by Thomas Moul have any real instrument of their own. He bestows on him a doubtful compliment, for William Plomer's massive diadem will likely enough turn into a crown of thorns if somebody does not knock it off his head.—Yours, &c.,

HERBERT E. PALMER.

### HUMAN MISFITS

CERTAINLY they are a fascinating fraternity—the *déplacés*. It is a term used by Emile Faguet in an essay on Stendhal, and it would be interesting to know if it is his own invention. Probably the nearest English equivalent is "misfits" or "anachronisms," but the French phrase is the more expressive.

In any age 99 per cent. are sheep—at home in the costume of their time. The tiny remnant are prophets—men like Rousseau or Marx, who fashion a mould for succeeding generations—or *déplacés*—men, who, to paraphrase Faguet, live in a house without knowing its inmates.

The *déplacés* fascinate because they are so intensely themselves, so strangely impervious to outside influence, and because only strong personalities make headway against main currents. But individuality and courage are also the mark of heroes. The distinction between the typically great man and the *déplacé* is this, that the former, intellectually speaking, has descendants, whereas the latter is an accident, a stray type merely, as disconnected with the future as the past.

It may help toward their realization to look for a moment to their opposites. Many men are the embodiment of their age. The sonority, the love of argument and logic and the lack of imagination of Dr. Johnson bespeak the eighteenth century. The Terror of 1793 gave magnificent scope to the ruthless self-righteousness of Robespierre, whilst Raleigh's name is almost synonymous with the versatility and chivalrous spirit of adventure of Elizabethan days and—to take one last instance—there is the essence of the Victorian age in the dignified reserves, the strenuousness and castigating moral sense of Gladstone.

A *déplacé*, like a signpost, points backward as well as ahead—a thought which does not exactly strengthen our belief in progress. He is as likely to revert by jumps as to anticipate. It was an odd chance which made Julian, the Apostate, Emperor of Rome within twenty-four years of the death of Constantine. Had he not died prematurely on the Persian campaign, he might have confronted Christianity with a rival in the form of a paganism purged of its grossness and impregnated with the highest philosophic teaching. The whole trend of his mind was to the past, and his every action was swayed by faith in ancient gods. It is curious to contemplate an emperor once more indulging in sacrificial victims and divinations after Constantine had made Christianity the imperial religion and founded S. Sophia in the city of his name. Psychologists, who would have a good deal to say about *déplacés* in general, might find the root of Julian's apostasy in an anti-Christian complex of early origin. For the massacre of his father and family occurred before he was six, and the sons of Constantine were almost certainly its instigators. Thus an indissoluble association was formed in the child's mind between the new religion and barbarity which may account for his devotion to a creed outworn.

The eighteenth dynasty Egyptian king, Amenhetep IV., or, as he styled himself, Khuenaten, is another intriguing anachronism, this time pointing onward and so a counterpoise to Julian. Scorning the old gods, Horus, Set and Toth and all their promiscuities, he instituted a single and poetic worship of the Sun, and at his new capital of Tel el Amarna built many temples to his glory. During his lifetime monotheism prevailed, but his reforms, alas, perished with him. At his death the reactionary priesthood reasserted its authority and all traces of his exotic culture—a heritage, perhaps, from a foreign mother—were conscientiously obliterated by his successors, among them

the youthful Tutankhamen. If Julian belonged to the days of Cato or to the Augustan age, Amenhetep would undoubtedly have found Plato congenial company. How he would have loved to pace up and down the Academy garden, the philosopher at his side, ardently discussing first principles! But destiny decreed that before light dawned on the author of the "Phædo," he should already be a mummy of hoary and forgotten antiquity.

Two other palpable misfits in time may be singled out from this world of religion—Erasmus and Newman. Had they been born in one another's cradles, they might both as changelings have led a happier, more self-expressive life. Mercifully Erasmus had a sense of humour, but it was a disaster to such a man—mentally akin to Matthew Arnold or John Morley, whose pacifist ideas he also shared—to be born in an age of fierce antagonisms and intolerance. One glance at his refined features and shrewd, penetrating expression is enough to make even a casual observer realize what a thorn in his flesh Martin Luther must have been—with all his vehemence and dogmatism. In a world so prone to controversy and militant propaganda it was indeed a mental martyrdom for any lover of "sweetness and light" to steer a middle course.

Newman, on the other hand, could have risen to his full stature as a contemporary of More and Colet. For in those days theological discussions still engaged the mightiest spirits, and appreciation of Greek thought was infusing into them fresh life. As it is, the little headway he made at Dublin Catholic College, the belated gift of the Cardinal's hat, and those long, sequestered years in the Edgbaston Oratory are food for melancholy thought. To many his life affords a pitiable illustration of the dissipation of a fine intellect upon a barren cause, and his fame rests not on his accomplishments but on his character. The appeal of the "Apologia" is for its sincerity and style and "Lead Kindly Light" will long outlive it. Two groups of people, in fact, are misfits, whenever they are born—saints, and Newman was one of them, and madmen. Both groups harass and upset the multitude, whose natural reaction is to crucify the one and imprison the other. And parenthetically there is this curious fact about the latter, that the standards of sanity change. Were the Kaiser, for example, transported back into the acquisitive days of Charlemagne, or even to those later centuries when the slumbers of his royal ancestors were troubled with dreams of that mediæval mirage, the Holy Roman Empire, it is certain he would no longer be dubbed either a lunatic or the villain of the piece.

A characteristic of all *déplacés* is their isolation and not infrequently the small impression they make on the generation which knows them. There is a casual, unflattering reference in Cicero to Lucretius, but it was not till the advent of chemistry, which also adduced an atomic theory, and especially of Darwinism, that "De Rerum Natura" secured a fair judgment.

Had Stendhal lived a century later, he would have been welcome among those unpleasant intellectual aesthetes, whom Mr. Aldous Huxley is at such pains to describe in "Point Counter Point." But in 1820 his unabashed egotism repelled and his introspections and his realism were out of tone with the exaltation and imaginative rhetoric of the idolized Victor Hugo. His "Le Rouge et le Noir" fell on rocky ground, so far as his contemporaries were concerned, nor did it promote imitation. But it claims kinship, on the other hand, both in form and power, with the psychological fiction, improved by scientific knowledge, which Mr. H. G. Wells has done so much to popularize. A

peculiarly modern trait in Stendhal's odd make-up is his insatiable appetite for new sensations, sought partly, at least, for the sheer pleasure of describing and analyzing them afterward.

*Déplacés* are as much a law unto themselves as comets in popular fancy. It is, moreover, their lot to be misunderstood and so unhappy, and most fail wretchedly in life, like Hamlet, their literary prototype. But to those few whose eccentricity wins through to some achievement, posterity makes what amend it can for the neglect of their contemporaries. Men like Stendhal, just because they are so curiously unrelated to their setting, are the subject of countless monographs. To reconcile their contradictions and interpret their remoteness is an intellectual pleasure, which never palls.

C. E. MUIRHEAD.

## RUSSIAN IKONS

WHATEVER criticisms the Soviet Government may deserve on other grounds, nothing but praise can be accorded to its energy and care in the treatment of works of art. Not the least important result of this attitude has been the astonishing revelation which its officials have made of the unknown treasures of early Russian art. This has come about through the agency of the national laboratory for the care and preservation of ancient pictures. The men employed on this work by the Soviet Government have for the first time had proper access to the ikons contained in churches, and by developing an excellent technique for removing repaints and the accretions of centuries of dirt and smoke have revealed to the world the unexpected treasures of ancient Russian art. The results of this treatment are now shown to the art students of Europe by means of a representative collection of ikons varying from the twelfth century to the nineteenth which is going the round of the chief art centres of Europe. This remarkable exhibition is now on view at the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington, and should be visited by everyone who has the least interest in art, and even by those who, caring but little for purely æsthetic pleasures and problems, may yet be curious to see the expression of a culture strangely dissimilar to that of our own past.

Here for the first time we see the colours of these early paintings as the artist conceived them and not as hitherto seen through an almost opaque veil of dark brown varnish or even, as has often been the case, covered up altogether by subsequent incrustations of beaten metal.

The result is to make them comparable to the earliest works of the Italian school. The common origins of both schools has, of course, long been known, but we can now see the surprising differences which the diverse mentalities of the two cultures subsequently brought about.

For both Russian ikons and thirteenth-century Italian paintings owe nearly everything to that astonishing neo-Hellenistic renaissance which took place in Byzantium in the second half of the twelfth century, the masterpieces of which are only now being fully explored in the Churches of Macedonia and Bulgaria.

We can now for the first time compare the divergent growths from this same parent stem—we can see what led in the West to Masaccio and Michelangelo and in the East to Rublev and Dionysius.

The earliest works shown here belong to that neo-



Hellenistic revival in Byzantium and have no Russian characteristics. These belong to the end of the twelfth century, a period when Greek masters were largely employed in Russia on important monumental schemes such as the frescoes at Pskov, Novgorod, and Vladimir. The thirteenth century, which follows this great period of purely Greek painting in Russia, is almost blank. We have, it is true, the splendid *Deesis* in the present exhibition, ascribed to that century, presumably belonging to its close, but this is still essentially Greek.

Nor is it really till the beginning of the fifteenth century and the appearance of Rublev that we feel ourselves in presence of a purely Russian style. Then, for the first time, a quite new interpretation was put upon the Byzantine formulæ. Even at this stage the general system of representation and the main lines of composition are still Byzantine. The Byzantine formula for rocky mountains towers ever higher and higher into the backgrounds, becoming ever more fantastic and unreal, the figures are still posed, usually in two polarized groups, as in the twelfth century, but there is a new tonality, a new atmosphere. In some ways this seems to indicate a strangely modern sensibility in its refinement and subtlety. It is almost as though Whistler had tried to express his feeling for effaced and impalpable harmonies in pictures drawn and designed by Cimabue.

This atmospheric quality in some of the finest works, particularly of the Moscow school, almost arrives at giving an idea of space and luminosity such as modern landscape explores, but it is only by colour and tone harmony that this idea is given—the drawing denies any such conception as vigorously as ever, remaining, as from the first, essentially linear and flatly decorative.

But that feeling for colour and tone is indeed the great delight of these typically Russian masters. And here, thanks to the marvellous results of the Russian methods of cleaning, we can enjoy them in all their splendour, appreciate their delicate and improbable discoveries, we can savour to the full these muted chords of celestial blues, faint roses, and dull greens on grounds of pale ivory or jade whites. The idea that one used to have of the heavy loaded colours of Russian ikons, the hot brown flesh colours and nearly black draperies is seen now to have been nothing but the travesty caused by dirty varnish and old repaintings.

The strangeness of these ikons of the great period lies, I think, in the fact of this curious combination of an extremely archaic formula with a subtle and almost "modern" sensibility to colour and tone. Naturally nothing like it occurred in the West, where, from the first, the discovery of natural form was undertaken methodically and progressed by degrees, which, at all events to our mind, appear to have been logical. In Russia there was apparently hardly any curiosity about natural form. The artists remained contented to the end with the elementary and gradually distorted symbolism which was part of their inheritance. All their efforts were directed to arranging these symbols in impressive combinations, and giving them the utmost decorative splendour. Each artist was content to express his personal feeling by the choice of his proportions, and by the values of his almost flat masses of colour. And, indeed, through these means of expression we find ourselves in contact with a whole world of feeling which seems utterly remote from our own. Nor do we get much further by calling it Oriental, for in effect it is more foreign and unfamiliar to our habits of thought and feeling than the art of the Near East and of China.

ROGER FRY.

## PLAYS AND PICTURES

### A National Theatre.

IT was announced in last week's *TIMES* that the Prime Minister was willing to consider favourably a scheme for a National Theatre which would have the unanimous approval of managers. On July 20th, *THE NATION* published an article by Mr. Francis Birrell on the subject, and I now only wish to say that the worst sort of National Theatre would be one that had the unanimous approval of managers. From the very start the scheme would be one of committee compromise. And unfortunately theatre managers, like mine owners, will probably find no great difficulty in lighting on a unanimous scheme to fleece the taxpayer. The first object of this new directorate will, no doubt, be to get hold of the £70,000 which Sir Carl Meyer gave twenty years ago towards a National Theatre, and which if it has been properly invested should amount by this time to a very pretty sum. If the scheme of the managers can be limited to wasting money for which no purpose has ever been found, no great harm will have been done and perhaps it will be advantageous for people to see how the National Theatre will work in practice. But it is to be earnestly hoped that before the scheme goes any further the Prime Minister will at any rate listen to hostile opinion. It is for the public, not for the theatrical profession, or even for a committee of professional playwrights, to decide whether a State-aided theatre is desirable.

### "Third Time Lucky," Ambassadors Theatre.

"Third Time Lucky" (Mr. Arnold Ridley's farce at the Ambassadors Theatre) is easy to criticize, and yet not difficult to enjoy. The writing is deplorable, and how much the play owes to the ingenuity of the producer we cannot say without having seen the MSS. But it seems probable that Mr. Ridley really possesses a strong visual sense of his own. Incidentally he fulfils Dryden's first condition in that his farce gets better as it goes on. The theme is a simple one. A mild, but heroic, vicar goes at night to expostulate with a blackmailer, who has some unwise letters written by his ward. From mere expostulation, he proceeds to more and more desperate enterprises. He mingles with crooks, dabbles in firearms, and is very amusingly acted by Mr. Hugh E. Wright. The success of the evening, however, was the comic burglar of Mr. Frank Bertram, who without having anything very funny to say, contrived to keep the house in fits of laughter. His reappearance in Act III. as an archdeacon is as amusing as anything that has been seen since Mr. John Worthing turned up sensationally at Woolton. I can recommend "Third Time Lucky." You will laugh quite a lot at the moment, though, to be sure, you may feel rather ashamed of yourself afterwards.

### "The Edge of Life," Embassy Theatre.

At Scotland Yard, according to the author of this play, they are all schoolboys together. Conversation is conducted in the form of good-humoured chaff as between high official and clerk, and the air positively whistles with elephantine badinage. Every noun is preceded by a string of adjectives—such long words, too—a burglar is delicately alluded to as "a gentleman with a penchant for jewellery," and prison as "a place where they bob one's hair rather severely." One of the high officials, who swears sometimes by the nine gods and sometimes by the Lord Harry, is on the verge of a nervous breakdown, and his superiors are not at all pleased with him. The state of his nerves is subtly indicated by his beating time for an imaginary orchestra, and his colleagues consider this form of flagellation very reprehensible and naughty. He redeems himself in the eyes of the authorities by tracking down some jewels which had been stolen by a terribly wicked but really terribly kind crook, who thinks the world of his motherless kid, as he calls her, and would rather be torn limb from limb than allow a hair on her head to be hurt. It's fine, he says, to have a good daughter as a memory of your dead wife. There have been some odd productions at the Embassy during its year of existence, but this, surely, is the oddest.



**The Tudor Singers, Æolian Hall.****The St. George's Singers, Wigmore Hall.**

Both these companies of singers gave works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries at their concerts last week, and both included some modern items in their programmes. At the Tudor Singers' concert a canticle for eight voices by Herbert Howells and a motet ("This Worlde's Joie") by Arnold Bax sounded well in the company of some Byrd and Purcell (three fantasias for strings). The Bax motet, in spite of being a trifle diffuse (though not long), has an interesting personal quality with some pleasing harmonies, and was given a satisfactory performance. Other things of some interest in the programme were the "Elegy on the death of Henry Noel," by Thomas Weelkes (1600), and a motet for double choir by Johann Hermann Schein who, born in Saxony in 1586, went later to Dresden and was one of the musicians who were greatly influenced by Italian music early in the seventeenth century, and were to some extent responsible for preparing the ground in which Bach grew up. At the St. George's Singers' concert (last Saturday evening) the modern works were by Gustav Holst, but interest centred more in the works by Orlando Gibbons, Byrd, and Weelkes, which were all well worth hearing. Both groups of singers have a pleasing style, and a welcome freedom (considering the music they sing) from affectedness.

**Jelly d'Aranyi, Wigmore Hall.**

Miss Jelly d'Aranyi has a simplicity of style on the concert platform which is very pleasing, and she also has a considerable command over her instrument both in range and capacity; but in a Corelli-Bach-Stravinsky-Brahms programme she did not get quite the best out of any of these composers. Her tone is full, but sometimes rather hard without being very clean. The Stravinsky Suite on themes by Pergolesi was played best, and its technical difficulties were satisfactorily inconspicuous. The themes in this work, played almost bare in places, lie a little uncomfortably with the latter-day harmonies, which increase in variety and dissonance as the suite proceeds: the rhythms however are better welded, and on the whole the series of short movements makes an interesting, if not very complete, formal arrangement. It would almost have been well if this had been the only thing Miss d'Aranyi had played, for faultless technique should be one of the reasons for playing Bach's unaccompanied sonatas on the concert platform, and the technique was not faultless, though there was considerable grasp and vigour in the playing of the fugue. The six Brahms Hungarian Dances, which ended the recital, were played with an over-emphasis which might have arisen either from annoyance or contented sympathy with the subject in hand.

**The Bloomsbury Gallery.**

The enterprising "Literary Bookshop," till lately in Coptic Street, has removed to larger premises in Bloomsbury Street and rechristened itself the "Bloomsbury Gallery": here it continues to hold exhibitions of paintings and sculpture by artists, English and foreign, of the "advanced" school. The present exhibition consists of paintings by Miss Frances Hodgkins and Miss Vera Cunningham. Of the latter it is inevitable to say that she is influenced by Mr. Matthew Smith; nevertheless her work has a strong individual flavour and a considerable decorative charm, and she has a pleasant sense of the quality of paint. "Washing Day" and "Still Life and Flowers" are two of her most successful pictures in this exhibition. Miss Frances Hodgkins, though still comparatively little known, is one of the most interesting of modern painters in this country; her work has a vitality and an originality which are really remarkable. One of her favourite types of subject—seen here in "Cottage Window," "Landscape," and "Spring"—is a still life group or a vase of flowers in the close foreground with a background of distant landscape, but it is in this rather exciting elimination of the "middle distance" that she is not always entirely successful. Sometimes there is too violent a division, and the two halves of the picture are disconnected. But her strong sense of design, her sound colour and vigour of

brushwork make her a painter who deserves more attention than she has so far received.

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Things to see and hear in the coming week:—

Saturday, November 30th.—

Jean Sterling Mackinlay and Harcourt Williams, Scottish Concert, Æolian Hall, 8.15.  
Borovsky, Pianoforte Recital, Grottrian Hall, 8.15.  
League of Arts' Choir, Brahms' Requiem, Victoria and Albert Museum, 8.

Sunday, December 1st.—

Stage Society, in "Douaumont, or the Return of the Soldier Odysseus," by Herr Eberhard Möller, Prince of Wales Theatre (December 1st-2nd).

"Wills and Ways," by Mr. Halcott Glover, at the Arts Theatre.

Film Society's Film, Tivoli, 2.30.

Monday, December 2nd.—

"The Amorists," by Mr. Dennis Bradley, at the Royalty.

Gerhardt, Brahms Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.

Tuesday, December 3rd.—

"The Storm," by Ostrovsky, at the Everyman.

Suggia, Bach Recital, Wigmore Hall, 5.30.

Wednesday, December 4th.—

"A Tragic Idyll," by Jean-Jacques Bernard, entitled "Martine," in an English version by Mr. J. L. Frith, at the Gate Theatre.

The London String Players, Orchestral Concert, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.

Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, on "Dr. Watson" (Miniature Biographies), the Wireless, 9.20.

Dr. Alfred C. Jordan, on "Dress in Relation to Health and Disease," 37, Russell Square, 4.

Thursday, December 5th.—

Viscount Cecil of Chelwood, on "The Present Position with regard to Disarmament," Friends' House, 8.

Mr. E. V. Knox, on "Parody," the Children's Theatre, 8.30.

Discussion between Professor Harold Laski and Dr. F. A. E. Crewe, on "Heredity and Environment," the Wireless, 8.

Friday, December 6th.—

Harold Samuel, Bach Recital, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.

OMICRON.

## THE WOOD

Near my house is a wood full of wonders,  
Dearer to my heart than many a dear friend.  
With each season it puts on some new beauty.  
In May between its old birches and oaks  
Bluebells spread into lawns and wind in lanes.  
Then splendour after splendour of scarlet and purple  
Great rhododendrons open their lordly flowers,  
While among them, yellow or pink or ivory-white,  
Feminine azaleas delicately unfold.  
But soon these glories are all withered and fallen,  
And once more it is a loneliness of green leaves  
Embowering cool repose in its cool shades.  
Slowly the summer passes; over the hazels  
Sweet honeysuckles ramble; the nuts ripen;  
Birch-leaves change to amber, the ferns to gold.  
But days shorten; stern winter is coming:  
With wind and rain sweeping the oaks, it lays  
Their branching grandeur bare against the sky.  
Lovelier in its severity then seems  
Their naked beauty than all their green pride.  
Why then, with such bountiful companionship  
Ever at hand to enchant or to console,  
Do I not stay content, but week by week  
With a heart restless and thankless, must be still  
Fleeing from a known happiness to towns  
And people whose souls I know not, nor they mine?  
Alas, being not a tree, but a mere man,  
What is better I see and praise, what is worse I follow.

R. C. TREVELYAN.

## THE WORLD OF BOOKS

## RUSSIAN LITERATURE

**T**ASTE hardly ever keeps an even keel; there is almost always a list to the superlatives of praise or blame.

It is not so many years since all the best judges of European literature put the Russians of the classical period, *i.e.*, between Gogol and Chekhov, in a class by themselves as novelists. To-day, it is difficult to think of anyone except Mr. Arnold Bennett who keeps this particular flag flying. The young, I am told, cannot read Dostoevsky, and many of the middle-aged, who twenty years ago thought him the greatest of all novelists, now find in him, as in Swinburne, little but sound and fury. The change is, no doubt, partly due to the inevitable and healthy ebb and flow in our likes and dislikes, partly to the fact that what the great Russian novelists were concerned with happens not to concern us so much in 1929 as it did in 1909. But it is also partly due to the curse of all critics and criticism, the religious attitude, the notion that God is God and Muhammad his prophet, that if salvation is to be found in Marcel Proust, there can be only damnation in Fedor Dostoevsky.

The truth, no doubt, lies somewhere between 1909 and 1929, but I believe it to be nearer the first than the second date. There is a tang of greatness about the great Russians which I cannot think to be spurious or imaginary. I get it even in books about them; even occasionally in the dreariest of Dostoevsky's letters. I get it, for instance, in two books recently published: "The Countess Tolstoy's Later Diary" (Gollancz, 12s. 6d.), and "New Dostoevsky Letters," translated by S. S. Kotliansky (Mandrake Press, 3s. 6d.). It is not necessary to say much about Countess Tolstoy's diary, because extracts from it were published in these columns. The more I read of the Countess Tolstoy's diaries and autobiographies, the more I sympathize with Tolstoy and the less I sympathize with her. He was, no doubt, a terrible man, but there was at least a quality of greatness in him; she was a terrible woman, with a quality of littleness and little-mindedness in her. Tolstoy's peculiar tang is so strong that it comes out in almost everything written about him. This is not, however, the case with Dostoevsky. There was a granitic quality in Tolstoy which enabled him unconsciously to impress himself upon things, events, persons; but it was things, events, persons which impressed themselves upon Dostoevsky. The man Dostoevsky is very difficult to grasp or focus. He flits and flickers through these new letters as he did through the old, a worried, uneasy, tortured, sensitive, expostulating, explaining shadow. Only occasionally when the expostulations or explanations turn upon a scene or character in something he is writing, upon "Crime and Punishment" or the "Brothers Karamazov," does one suddenly see something painfully real, Dostoevsky the novelist.

But if anyone wants to see the quality of Russian fiction of the nineteenth century, he should read "Oblomov," by Ivan Goncharov, translated by Natalie Duddington (Allen & Unwin, 10s. 6d.). It is a strange fact that hitherto there has been no complete translation into English of what has always been considered by Russians to be one of the masterpieces of their literature. Translator and publisher of the present edition deserve our gratitude. "Oblomov" is a really great novel, but fully to appreciate its greatness it is essential to read it in a

complete, unabridged translation. Goncharov is one of those writers whose methods are accumulative. In translation one cannot see that stylistically he is a very beautiful or brilliant writer; indeed, at first sight, he seems to be rather dull and pedestrian. It is, of course, possible that in the original his style may be more distinguished, but I think I remember that in Prince Mirsky's book on Russian literature those critics who rank Goncharov as a stylist are said to be quite wrong. So that we who have to be content with translations may perhaps console ourselves.

"Oblomov" has practically none of the qualities which are popularly thought to be necessary in a novel. It has no plot. It has hardly any incidents. The hero spends most of his time asleep or lying on a sofa wrapped in an old dressing-gown. He becomes engaged to be married; his engagement is broken off; he marries his landlady; he dies. That is all. That is Goncharov's "plot," in the ordinary sense. The character drawing, at first sight, is not very good. Only Oblomov, his servant Zahar, and the landlady, Agafya Matveyevna, have much solid individuality. The minor characters are shadowy, and even Stolz, Oblomov's friend, and Olga, the girl to whom he becomes engaged, though they have individuality, and though their psychology is drawn with extraordinary subtlety, are not convincing as persons. And yet the book, despite the fact that it has little or no plot, no incidents, not very good "characters," nothing remarkable about its style, must be counted among the greatest novels. This absurd story about a lazy man who sleeps his life away in an old dressing-gown is transformed by the patient, subtle, relentless art of Goncharov into something tremendously exciting. Sentence by sentence, it is built up into a form of amazing sweep and vastness, a great epic, a terrible comedy, into one of those great works of art in which no one can say exactly where the tragedy begins and the comedy ends. Bit by bit, the reader himself is drawn into the slow and subtle rhythm of this absurd story; the quiet, unpretentious sentences acquire beauty and intensity; the characters themselves become painfully real; and through the surface of the "story" and the banality of its "incidents" one sees vista after vista opening deep into human life itself. In "Oblomov," as in so many great works of art, though, strictly speaking, there is no symbolism, in the end everything, including the all-enveloping dressing-gown, has become a symbol.

Many critics have written of "Oblomov" as if it contained a moral. This is to misunderstand the whole point of the book if it is implied that Goncharov draws a moral. He never does, and that is one reason why his book is a masterpiece. When Oblomov finally gives up all struggle with life and resigns himself to eating, sleeping, and marrying his landlady, for Stolz and Olga, the passionate strugglers with life, "the abyss has opened," and Oblomov has vanished in it. No doubt they judge him, but Goncharov never does. He never implies that Stolz and Olga are right, and Oblomov wrong—and in the scales of truth and eternity, Stolz and Olga are not right nor Oblomov wrong. Agafya Matveyevna, the landlady, thought that Oblomov was right, and there is no reason to think—in the scales of eternity—that she was more mistaken than Olga or Stolz.

"Oblomov sighed.

"Life!" he said.

"What about it?"

"It disturbs one, gives one no peace! I wish I could lie down and go to sleep . . . for ever. . ."

After all, many of the wisest men have said the same.

LEONARD WOOLF.



## REVIEWS

## THE THIRD INCOMPREHENSIBLE

Elizabeth Barrett Browning: *Letters to her Sister, 1846-1859.*  
 Edited by LEONARD HUXLEY, LL.D. (Murray. 21s.)

WHEN, in 1849, a son was born to the Brownings, some profane wag exclaimed, "Now there are not two Incomprehensibles but three Incomprehensibles." Many readers of this new collection of unpublished letters from Elizabeth Barrett Browning will be irresistibly reminded of this anecdote, for the most distinct and not the least interesting figure is that of Robert Wiedeman Barrett Browning, self-styled Peninni. True, there is no hint of him before page 99, where Ba is asking, "as a mere matter of curiosity," what is the price in England of "that very fine French cambric of which babies' caps are made?" but his diminutive form pervades two-thirds of the book, setting the ringleted, untidy, ecstatic figure of his mother in its most attractive light.

Previously published letters have made us familiar with Mrs. Browning's epistolary style, her inveterate slipshodness, her facile arduous, her courage, her idealism, her little exasperating tricks of habit and humour. There is nothing here, in this series admirably edited by Dr. Leonard Huxley, to suggest that earlier verdicts should be revised or rescinded now. As elsewhere, the descriptions of life in Italy have a good deal of colour, though it is the colour of a tinted lithograph. The famous personages who pass across the scene, Tennyson, Thackeray, Carlyle, the Empress Eugénie, the Prince of Wales, Florence Nightingale, even Hume, the original of Sludge, look rather like those portraits in chalk and crayon such as the age loved, where the whites of the eyes are insistently white, there are high lights on every fold of hair, every curve of ambrosial whisker, and the self-conscious lips are carefully touched with a rose-coloured pencil. Even Robert, the plaid-trouserer, long-suffering Robert, sometimes seems a bundle of energetic and endearing qualities rather than a man. It is Peninni, the chubby infant incongruously thrust by destiny upon these two, who dominates and is alive.

For Robert one feels a growing sense of commiseration. He was tidy, and in some ways he was almost conventional. He found Ba's uncouth headgear, her perforated gloves, hard to endure; but, except for occasional good-humoured outbreaks, he *did* endure them. His full-blooded sanity must have been affronted by her spiritualistic craze; but he vented his annoyance upon Sludge rather than upon Sludge's patroness. Mrs. Browning writes from Paris in 1856:—

"Think of my horror at Robert's having heard to-day that Hume the medium is in Paris. I thought he was in Rome. I looked so scared that Robert promised me he would be 'meek as a maid' for my sake, and that if he met the man in the street he would pass without pretending to see (*sic*). Oh... perhaps you don't know that Robert has talked himself into quite a hatred of this Hume, which, of course, was very foolish indeed."

There are several similar passages in these letters, all throwing light on the genesis of "Sludge the Medium," and none likely to convert waverers to the spiritualistic faith. The merest flicker of humour would have been enough to put the incidents described in their true focus. But the gravity of Ba was dyed in grain.

During her lifetime and for many years after her death, Elizabeth Barrett Browning was accepted as unquestionably the greatest of the Victorian women-poets, alone on a pedestal. She has lost that pre-eminence. Few critics would now rank her above Christina Rossetti, whose austere, crinolined figure stands to-day beside the veiled and violet-locked image of Sappho. Yet there is this to be said for the dispossessed Elizabeth. Her letters may not bear the authentic impress of a poet's mind as do, for instance, the letters of Shelley and Keats; but compared with the monochrome jog-trot of Christina's they are iridescent and lyrical. Her imagination did not, as Christina's did, carve out for itself a narrow channel, ever deepening and darkening towards an unseen sea. It was rather a flood constantly breaking through dykes and dams, and spreading, shallow and luminous, over wide stretches of land. If, however, we pause to ask ourselves why Mrs. Browning's letters, tenuous and hectic though they often are, hold a charm unattain-

able by her sister-singer, we shall probably find the answer in the one word "Peninni."

We see him here as a most engaging child, precocious but not in the least priggish, and incomprehensible only in the sense that all babies are so. We come upon him staggering about in a plumed hat worthy of Kemble in the rôle of Hamlet; shouting *Viva Peone* as Louis Napoleon rattles by in his gilded coach; delighting in the beauty of the sun "which God hangs on a nail"; declining to eat "a rabbit, poor sing"; longing for a "little brozer," and suggesting wistfully that Vincenzo, the manservant, should go out and "catch a little boy" for his mother. He was also a child of powerful intuitions. When his parents took him with them on a formal call of inquiry at the house of George Sand, Pennini was heard to deliver himself thus to his small playmate, Desirée: "Pennini e Papa e Mamma via Torge And. Torge And no bene. Torge And un poeta." Could volumes have said more?

DOROTHY MARGARET STUART.

## NEW NOVELS

**A Farewell to Arms.** By ERNEST HEMINGWAY. (Cape. 7s. 6d.)

**The Hawbucks.** By JOHN MASEFIELD. (Heinemann. 7s. 6d.)

**Seven Tales and Alexander.** By H. E. BATES. (Scholartis Press. 7s. 6d.)

**Early Sorrow.** By THOMAS MANN. (Secker. 5s.)

**The Shout.** By ROBERT GRAVES. (Mathews & Marrot. 6s.)

**Monks are Monks.** By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN. (Knopf. 7s. 6d.)

BLUNTNESS and virility are definite virtues in a novelist, but Mr. Hemingway cultivates them too seriously. His blunt, virile story is told in the first person by Lieutenant Frederic Henry, an American serving with the Italian Field Ambulance on the Austrian front in the late war. Frederic is very much a man, and so is his friend Rinaldi, the surgeon, and all their conversations are very male; Frederic also spends his leave in very male style, and there is a good deal of intensively masculine drinking and fornication, described at times in the babbling fashion of writing popularized by Miss Gertrude Stein. Frederic is blown up by a shell while he is eating cheese in a dugout—later he gets decorated for his bravery—and as his wounds are severe he is sent to hospital in Milan. There he carries on an intrigue with an English V.A.D., whom he had already met at the front. When he is fit again he is sent back, but presently deserts, joins his V.A.D., and escapes to Switzerland. In Switzerland, Frederic and Catherine are very happy until something goes wrong in Catherine's confinement. The surgeon operates, but the child is already dead, and in a few hours Catherine is dead too. Death in childbirth, with all its fake conclusiveness and tragedy, is an old favourite with the second-rate novelist, but the realism with which Mr. Hemingway describes Catherine's death is neither second-rate nor second-hand, and I do not think that it was altogether the necessity to end his novel that moved him to kill the heroine. Frederic and Catherine are two people as healthy and dull as a man and woman can be. To philosophy, art, religion, social injustices, finance, politics, personal relationships other than their own, and to all the inquietudes that interest in such matters breeds, Frederic and Catherine are either strangers or immune. All they want is good food and drink, a comfortable double bed, pleasant weather, a pack of cards, some newspapers if possible. The human species as a whole may be cursed for meddling in matters too high and difficult for it, but surely the few and rare Frederics and Catherine's might be left at peace in their golden inanity. Mr. Hemingway wants to show what a shocking mess humanity is in when even a perfect pair of animals like these cannot love and propagate undisturbed and grow mellow and bored and old together. First, in the war, we are shown the pitch to which human beings have brought the science and practice of mutilating one another. Its horror reaches a climax in the ambulance when the man placed in the stretcher above the helpless Frederic bleeds to death on top of him. By the simple and unsentimental method of desertion he can leave the war behind, but death (in the surgeon's coat and rubber gloves as M. Cocteau conceived it) turns up at Lausanne too, and Catherine also dies of a hæmorrhage. This ghoulish preoccupation with the vulnerability of human flesh is inevit-

able in after-war literature, but Mr. Hemingway is not merely in the vogue; he is concerned in remembering the war for the sake of its general and persistent significance. Unfortunately "A Farewell to Arms" is written in a style which is often awkward and shapeless, and while the thesis gains by the dullness of the characters, the narrative suffers. Happy love even among the super-intelligent is notoriously difficult to make interesting in fiction; here the conversations consist of "You're a lovely girl," "You're a fine girl," and "I'm good. Aren't I good? You don't want any other girls, do you?" repeated and repeated with a few variations. It has been pointed out that maps made upon the scale of one mile to one mile serve the purpose of maps rather poorly.

"The Hawbucks" is an odd book, too. The writing is good and easy, as one would expect, but Mr. Masfield gives his thoroughly Edwardian hunting romance a curiously Georgian turn when he makes his beautiful heroine choose the worst boulder out of all her suitors. There is nothing very improbable in her choice—most of the suitors are dull dogs, good at rolling tennis lawns, but either moony or mum, with the exception of Vaughan, whose tactics are almost too mediæval to be credible. The hero, the elder brother of the boulder of Carrie Harriew's choice, marries Carrie's half-sister, a "hushed-up" half-sister, and there again the true Edwardian romance appears, but Mr. Masfield treats the hearts of all his characters with a neglect and indifference that leaves his plot looking rather plaintive and widowed. "The Hawbucks" has the dullness that comes of putting too many contradictions into one novel. Carrie, however, is really lovely, as women are lovely in Meredith, and the country is really the country. "A field of pale plough lay above a field of red plough, with elm-trees black-twigged against the sky, rooks building in them, and the intense green under the hedge."

The admirable thing about Mr. Masfield is that he is not at pains to be anything in particular. His novel, dull though it is, has a sort of grace and carriage that no book by Mr. Hemingway or Mr. Bates will ever possess so long as the chief anxiety of the one is to be inartistic, and of the

other to be so desperately artistic. "Seven Tales and Alexander" is a collection of short sketches and one fairly long story about Alexander who goes with his uncle in a cart a great many miles to pick fruit one beautiful autumn day. Wordsworth once said that heaven lies about us in our infancy, and since that day the supply of heavens and infants has poured from the publishing press in a steadily increasing stream. Some of the heavens and some of the infants have been good. "Jackanapes" was good, and Katherine Mansfield's "Prelude." Perhaps Mr. Bates tries to make the heaven of his Alexander appear too authentic. Something in any case is wrong with this child idyll, but the book is prettily bound in white and blue and pleasantly printed—a good sort of book to give away.

In "Early Sorrow" no heaven lies about the infancy described. The elder children in the family of a German professor are giving a party, and the little children are allowed to stay up for a treat. Ellie, the youngest and the darling of the professor, takes a great fancy to a presentable young man four or five times her own age. Her distress is so great when she is parted from him that the professor is summoned. He finds her sitting among her pillows. "Her head is on one side with the eyes rolled up to the corner between wall and ceiling above her bed. For there she seems to envisage the anguish of her heart, and even to nod to it—either on purpose or because her body is shaken with the violence of her sobs. Her eyes rain down tears." The cause of all this anguish comes up to the nursery and consoles her with some foolish, self-conscious words, and then the child goes to sleep. Here we have as little of a story as in "Alexander," and Thomas Mann is very much more sentimental than most English writers of his standing would dare to be, but the great difference is that one need not believe "Alexander" unless one wishes to, but one must believe "Early Sorrow."

"The Shout" is even smaller. It belongs to the Woburn Books, a series of short stories, so limited, and so costly for their size, that one supposes they are designed for millionaires to send to one another instead of the common Christmas card. Two others of the series are published

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with "The Shout"—"Fame," by Miss May Sinclair, and "A Ghost in the Isle of Wight," by Mr. Shane Leslie—but "The Shout" is the only interesting one of the three. It is a story told by a lunatic at a cricket match—a good setting. Mr. Graves lures the reader most persuasively into a labyrinth of confused personalities, but provides only a slight clue to the way out. The characters are natural and rather charming, and the queeriness of the story is the fruit of imagination and not of ingenuity.

The tail of this review fits it no better than the prehensile tail of a monkey would fit a respectable dog. Mr. Nathan calls his latest book a Diagnostic Scherzo by way of warning, and a certain amount of warning is necessary. As a novel it is negligible, but as a series of immensely long monologues it is a feat of writing probably without any parallel. Lorinda, the heroine, is a young lady in search of a lover, and the lover must be a man of literary ability. But a man of literary ability cannot express himself clearly and fully upon life and literature and make love at the same time, while there are other reasons just as adequate why a man may not be able to make love at all. My own favourite among Lorinda's unsatisfactory friends is Mr. O'Hara, the dramatic critic and author. "I've seen, heard, read, written, staged, thought, analyzed, and criticized sex until the word gives me a headache," Mr. O'Hara tells Lorinda. "The prospect of indulging in sex thrills me about as much as the prospect of indulging in a motor ride would thrill Henry Ford."

LYN LL. IRVINE.

## BUILDING SOCIETIES

**Building Societies as Investments.** By ARTHUR DUDLEY SOUTHAM. (Effingham Wilson. 8s. 6d.)

THIS is how Mr. Southam begins his book on "Building Societies as Investments":—

"Primarily intended and originally created on a co-operative basis and, as such, membership being strictly limited, Building Societies were in reality Clubs, entrance being confined and limited to its own borrowers, each of whom joined his Society with the definite object of, in his turn, obtaining the needful Loan to enable him to purchase or build, and finally to own, his own home."

It is a pity that Mr. Southam cannot express himself more clearly, for his little book is extremely interesting. A building society, as he says, is a "clearing house" for mortgages or mortgage investments. Few people seem to appreciate sufficiently the excellent security offered by an investment in Building Society shares or deposits. The most reliable debtor in the world is the man who has invested in his own home and intends to live in it. The Building Society lends him money—usually up to 75 per cent. of the valuation, if the house is freehold—and this loan is constantly increasing in security as the borrower is paying off capital as well as interest. A Building Society share or deposit represents an interest in thousands of such well-secured loans. It is a curious anomaly that while a trustee, acting on the report of a competent surveyor, is allowed to make an advance out of trust funds up to two-thirds of the surveyor's valuation on freehold or long leasehold property, Building Society mortgages, although spread over many thousands of separate properties, are not eligible as trustee investments. In many American States, Building Society securities, according to Mr. Southam, are legal trustee investments.

A table in Mr. Southam's book which will interest those of us who have had reason to complain of lawyers' charges in the buying and selling of property, is that comparing lawyers' fees for mortgages and the cost of Building Societies' solicitors employed on agency terms for the same work. On a £1,000 mortgage on registered land the solicitors' fees are £20, while the average cost of Building Societies' solicitors' fees is £4 4s. On a £5,000 mortgage the lawyers' fees are £60, against the Building Societies' £5 5s. Building Societies, of course, have special arrangements with solicitors which enable them to reduce their fees to a nominal amount. In more ways than one we appear unappreciative of the services offered by our Building Societies.

## MR. QUENNEL AND THE SYMBOLISTS

**Baudelaire and the Symbolists.** By PETER QUENNEL. (Chatto & Windus. 7s. 6d.)

MR. QUENNEL's sensitive study of Baudelaire and his followers belongs acutely to the newest school of criticism. It is the aim of the author, not to tell us directly what he thinks and we ought to think about his subject, but to try and describe the effect made on his sensibility by the sensibility of the author and then to communicate to us indirectly his own opinions on the subject, to write a work of art, in effect, on works of art. In undertaking this difficult task Mr. Quennell has had a good measure of success. In the essay on Baudelaire he concentrates on one or two aspects of the author's mentality, particularly on his "dandyism" and his belief in virtue as a form of "make-up" as something imposed on the natural barbarism of man, instead of a potentiality inherent in the human spirit struggling against a superimposition of sin. Hence all morality is a form of art, and the making of works of art becomes the whole duty of man. Dandyism, in a simplified, austere, almost monkish form, is the keynote to Baudelaire's existence. His outside and his inside are governed by the same principles. Mr. Quennell sees Baudelaire also sharpening his sensibility against the whetstone of the modern town.

"It is a background of urban civilization. . . . Then as the modern poet, Baudelaire, let us say, or another and lesser poet from the host of his literary descendants, Jules Laforgue or Mallarmé, wanders past, born *flâneurs* all of them were, peering up and noticing the damp, corrugated surface of the advertisements, though he may experience and record his personal immense 'nausée des affiches,' he also experiences a sense of immense exaltation: he feels that inward quiver of disgust and excitement, with which every healthy organism responds to the idea of change.

"Baudelaire saw Paris change all round him, but not gradually and stealthily, as other cities have changed. The new builders cut their way into antiquity, like a mower cutting a swathe through a field of tall grass. New avenues and new boulevards were opened: old quarters disappeared in dust and rubble:—

"Le vieux Paris n'est plus (la forme d'un ville  
Change plus vite hélas! que le cœur d'un mortel)."

In an excellent sketch of Corbière, Mr. Quennell does succeed in squeezing into a paragraph the sensibility of his subject. "Like Edward Fitzgerald (though whether or not sharing Fitzgerald's emotional bias seems obscure), Corbière spent several years cradled passionately among the wallowing aquatic monsters of the northern seas." He had been "the wind's tennis ball," had courted dangerous currents and reefs: he had visited the sailors' brothels and drinking places, and had written the collection of verses called "Armor" and "Gens de Mer." Superbly vigorous essays! And yet underlying his celebration of "Le bossu Bitor"—Bitor the hunchback throwing away his stockingful of savings in the "baigne-lupanar, Breton sailors named *Cap-Horn*—of *Le Douanier*, a salt-dried and sun-bitten angel—

'Qui flânes dans la tempête  
Sans auréole à la tête  
Sans aile à ton habit bleu'

—there is an ironic second thought which sets off these solid insistent companions against the writer's own sensitive instability. . . . He is obliged to leave them all behind and to set his face towards the capital where his destiny as a poet will be realized."

Mr. Quennell asks therefore to be judged as a writer, one who will render sensitively his own psychological adventures among the works of Baudelaire, Nerval, Corbière, or Rimbaud. Enough has been quoted to indicate his capacities as an imaginative writer, capacities which can only make one regret the more keenly sentences like the following, which are rather too frequent.

"La beauté sobre et élégante du navire moderne," he wrote, and in the 'Journaux intimes,' a citation perhaps than which there are few more important for the just understanding of his work," &c. The following sentence makes no sense at all: "And tradition has worn the immovable

disdain of Racine's feature when they (?) danced a derisive round before his bust in the *foyer* of the Comédie française." It would be easy to quote a score of sentences in which the grammar is equally defective. And this manner of writing seems common to a whole school of younger critics who, swollen with victory over British art and British morals, will not be content till British syntax has been sent reeling after the other two.

FRANCIS BIRRELL.

### A PAGAN COMMENTARY

*The Cradle of God.* By LLEWELYN POWYS. (Cape. 10s. 6d.)

Mr. Powys's commentary upon the Bible from Abraham's visionary "invention" of the Jewish God to the last "lamentable and tragic" cry of Jesus upon the cross seems to be inspired by two or even three conflicting impulses which he never fully resolves. He is, as he claims, naturally heathen, a frank and thorough-going pagan: "Let no flower of the spring pass by us." Than this there is no greater wisdom. Any assurance arrived at otherwise than through the senses is illusory." He is not merely non-Christian, he is anti-Christian, comparing Christianity to "a wooden match struck for a moment in a heathen temple," and singing almost lyrically the extinction of that feeble glow. For him Jesus, Gautama, Mohammed were all "inspired recreants to life," building themselves barriers against naked fact, and seeking to tempt others aside to approve their weakness. Give no heed to them, he urges,

"but with emancipated hearts make your escape sure. Your heathen loyalties shall be deeper and truer than their loyalties. Leave those dingy temples with their unsmuffed candle-lights to the infirm and to the old. Even now your hour passes. With ineluctable glee dip your hands deep into the salt fresh sea of life. Lift up your eyes and behold the sun."

In such passages as these—and there is notably one of really splendid eloquence and noble beauty in the pages on the book of Ecclesiastes, to which naturally Mr. Powys is especially drawn—the author's predominant impulse is revealed, but it alone, one feels, would never have evoked this volume. Mr. Powys would have left the Bible alone, or else attacked it directly. But he was brought up in the faith he now rejects, reared in a contact with its scriptures so constant and so intimate that the power and magic of its phrases and tales are part, he says, of the very marrow of his bones. He has, too, the memory of his father, "that venerable figure at the altar, so aged in mind that it was necessary for him to renew his memory of the grave, beatific words from a prayer-book on the holy table." Did he, that old man, he wonders, contribute but to a deceit? "Christian arguments are false arguments, Christian thoughts shallow thoughts; yet, even so, these prayerful madcaps have held, perhaps, of some invisible clue denied to ruder natures."

So it is in quest of that clue, or at least of some "juster understanding of these incredible impossibilities," that he journeys to Palestine (but the account of his travels there is reserved, in the main, for a later book), and that he goes delving back into these well-remembered pages, plundering the variety and richness of their chronicles and tales, their dramas and their songs, and presenting them anew glowing and vivid in the light of a loving and poetic apprehension. How splendid! his heart invariably cries, even when his revolting intelligence cannot but echo, How mistaken! or How false! Perhaps it can scarcely be said that he discovers the clue he looks for. Pagan he is, and pagan he remains; the utmost tribute he can pay even to Jesus is that of one poet to another greater poet. But he sees Jesus, and with him Abraham, Jacob, Samuel, Saul, David, Elijah, Judas Maccabeus, and all the many other captains, kings, prophets, and disciples, as living and very human figures, and forces the reader too to see them so. As for the prose in which it is written, the memorable quality of which sets it aside at once as a book in a thousand, those readers whose interest does not extend to the Bible itself may be recommended to this volume for the sake of Mr. Powys's style alone.

### THE ART OF THE FILM

*On Film Technique.* Three Essays and an Address by V. I. PUDOVKIN. Translated by IVOR MONTAGU. (Gollancz. 6s.)

SPEED is the desire of an industrial age, and the glittering, rapid world of the cinema screen, ever keeping time with the running strip of celluloid, is an expression of that desire. All is quickened upon the screen, nothing is prolonged save that ultimate "close-up" kiss, the "nectareous camel-draught" of world romance. Captains of industry might have fashioned that dream world, in which human beings walk faster, work and spend so rapidly. The luxurious palaces and automobiles, in which we see hero and heroine, are but the refulgent prizes of our commercial civilization. At dark, in his ninepenny seat, the poor man may dream himself a millionaire. The commercial film amplifies and illustrates the commercial age.

The essays by V. I. Pudovkin, the famous Russian producer, deal with the technique of the film as art. But, curiously enough, his theories and technical practice are well fitted to express a Communistic ideal. The style of the book, which comes to us through a German translation, is heavily psychological and specialized, but the central idea may be abstracted in brief. First of all, Pudovkin banishes the film "star." World sweethearts and world embracers must fade out: the film represents humanity rather than colossal individuals. Furthermore, Pudovkin practically banishes the actor and substitutes the camera itself. This requires explanation. Everyone knows vaguely that the ordinary film is made in sets, and that the various "shots" or scenes are ultimately combined and pieced together. The art of the film, according to Pudovkin, consists of *montage* or constructive editing. The "editor" builds his picture, rhythmically, from countless bits of film: these bits are to him what words are to a poet, or musical phrases to a composer. One example of the secondary part played by the actor may be cited. A "close-up" of a famous Russian film actor was taken: the face was static and did not express any feeling at all. The "close-up" was combined, separately, with a "shot" of a plate of soup, of a coffin in which lay a dead woman, of a little girl playing with a top. The effect in each case was wonderful. The public raved over the actor's pensive mood and the forgotten soup, it wept at his sorrow over the dead woman, and was happy in his smile as he watched the child at play. But in each case, the face was the same. To the camera itself Pudovkin attributes uncanny power: it searches crowds for a face, reveals, gropes, analyzes. This technique suggests a cold perfection: an organized humanity composed of interchangeable units rather than of individuals. Most Russian films are forbidden in this country, and we cannot judge by results.

The technique of the Left Wing is a logical development, however, of Hollywood practice. America discovered the true art of telling a story in pictures, when the camera was allowed to take its part, selecting, isolating, pursuing. We see a woman on trial: suddenly, we see only her hands, the veins knotted, the fingers clutching the dock. Objects become expressive: a revolver is a silent threat, a racing motor-car is a symbol of hope or aid. Expressiveness obviously leads to expressionism, as we can see from this book. Even on the stage, however, expressionism proves too simple and allegoric: bells are rung to represent distracted nerves, the subconscious is personified by a veiled figure: we return to the crude abstractions of the mediæval Moralities.

What is Pudovkin's attitude to the schismatic and imperfect "Talkies"? The film appeals primarily to the eye. The human eye is rapid and it can select, concentrate on a single expressive object. The ear is slow: it cannot isolate sounds. We can imagine stokers talking: but we cannot "cut out" the roar and clatter of the furnace-room. Hollywood has set eye and ear quarrelling. Pudovkin compromises, and suggests a contrapuntal use of speech and sound.



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To compress a history of music into two small volumes, and to make those volumes clear enough for school-children and interesting enough for adults, cannot have been an easy piece of work. The authors are to be congratulated upon accomplishing it. In their selection of the composers and the compositions to be mentioned they have shown thorough knowledge of the subject and a good sense of proportion. But where the book is critical it is apt to be commonplace and slipshod in the effort to convey ideas shortly and in a fashion easily to be understood. Too much is made, in the story of the progress of music, of its similarities with the other arts, and of the influence of the Renaissance and the Romantic Revival upon it. Literature and the plastic arts have known their parents in Greek and other ancient civilizations and learnt much from them. But music has never known its parents. It is an orphan among the arts, and though this may have retarded its development, yet it has given to music an independence and originality which is characteristic of orphans. Only the less inspired musicians have reflected the literature and painting of their time.

There are some places in this Outline where one puts very large question marks in the margin. "Previous to this [the drastic political changes which swept Europe during the last quarter of the eighteenth century] literature and painting had become almost stagnant through being saturated in artificiality and pseudo-classicism." Such generalizations lead on to classifications which can only be very partially true: such as saying that Bach is not of his age. We should like to see less use of the word "colour" as applied to music—but the vocabulary of musical criticism is notoriously inadequate. Musicians themselves are often the greatest offenders: Wagner said that "Mendelssohn was a landscape painter of the first order." But although one can find a number of faults in this as in any History of Music hitherto written, it is full of information of great value to anyone beginning the study of music, and has much that will interest the general reader. Few people know how large a place opera has held in the history of music, becoming after the sixteenth century almost as important and influential as church music was before that. A very curious—though quite a different sort of fact—which the book brings out, is the number of great composers who have been infant prodigies. This suggests that the ability to compose music is essentially different from other artistic talents, which usually develop more gradually, and often are not manifest until after physical maturity. There is a strange mental brilliance in these youthful composers; they remind one of lightning calculators.

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**Daguerreotypes.** By ADA WALLAS. (Allen & Unwin. 5s.)

MRS. GRAHAM WALLAS has presented, by means of a number of short sketches of her own childhood some sixty years ago, a picture of the general circumstances and atmosphere in which the daughters of middle-class country families were brought up. It is a picture with a delicate and lovingly wrought surface, in which artistry has combined with recollection to produce a neat and careful finish. If occasionally one has the feeling that all this, or something very much like it, has been read of before, that is because Mrs. Wallas describes a household which is, as regards the education of its feminine members, the typical embodiment of "Victorianism."

From our present heights of freedom and emancipation we use the term with lofty contumely—and suspect sometimes that these ladylike conditions never seriously held the field. But Mrs. Wallas vindicates the word. She demonstrates, from her own experience, the whole dainty process of turning a high-spirited and romping child into a prettily mannered, squeamish young lady with long passages of selected poetry in her head by way of culture. She shows governesses teaching arithmetic with reluctant diffidence lest this too-masculine pursuit should mar their pupil's grace.

She exhibits, but kindly and with sympathy, the amazing lack of qualification with which impoverished gentlewomen would set out to teach the young. The Misses Locke, to whose school she went at seven years old, had a mental equipment perhaps equal to their material one, which consisted of two forms and six glass inkpots. The main attraction was the five minutes' walk there and back. In a passage illustrating the faithfulness and intimacy of her childhood memories, Mrs. Wallas writes:—

"No one, who has not been brought up in a large family, knows the joy of being out alone on some rare May morning, or of stopping to crack the ice in the cart-ruts in winter with the heel of your boot without being told to 'come on.'"

If the unfortunate pupil were sent to be "finished" at a boarding school, she would be taught to fold her hands when sitting, and move them to right or left "according to the position of the lady whom she happened to be addressing." This reads, now, like a parody, but although Mrs. Wallas records these customs with a twinge of humour as seen with modern eyes, she makes it evident that the growing girl of the period, while healthily averse from discipline, saw nothing preposterous in such aims and methods. Only the governess who demanded intelligence instead of memorizing was resented by her pupils. Childhood is a time of intense conservatism, at least in its middle years when it is echoing the average adult mind. The process of "educating one's elders" does not begin until the child becomes conscious of its own separate existence by means of outer contacts. In the period of which Mrs. Wallas writes these contacts arrived late or not at all. So it is only natural to find her and her sisters sharing the horror of "a strong-minded female" as recorded in the family confession book; while Briggs and Brody, the two visitant advocates of women's rights, became the butt of hearty ridicule in the nursery. The opening of a high school for girls, amid horrified comments of the old stagers, marks the end of this ladylike dark period, and shows the author fortunate in her parents, since they decided ultimately to send her there.

Mrs. Wallas has looked at her material from two angles. Seeing it first from present-day conditions as a gradually evolved but striking contrast, she has then slipped back into the period, charmed by an affection for the old remembrances. It is this affection that gives them detail, atmosphere and particularity, although it is half mockingly indulged, like the irrational preference for an old rag doll over the most complex of mechanical toys that skill and ingenuity can devise.

## THE EAST

**East for Pleasure.** By WALTER B. HARRIS. (Arnold. 21s.)

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**Romantic Ceylon: Its History, Legend, and Story.** By R. H. BASSETT. (Palmer. 7s. 6d.)

MR. HARRIS's recipe for satisfactory travel is an abandonment of racial prejudices combined with a full measure of consideration, comprehension, and good humour. He is one who follows his own instruction, and the fruits of it are abundantly evident in this very long, interesting, and important book, which records the impressions of eight months' recent wandering in Burma, Siam, the Netherlands East Indies, and French Indo-China. Merely as a readable account of varied scenes—many of them right off the conventional highways—the book, both for quantity and quality, deserves high rank among modern works of travel. Mr. Harris has a keen, but never superficial, eye; and his pen responds sensitively, yet never facily, to every turn of his many-sided vision. But he has given us more than a fascinating kaleidoscope. His volume is a political survey of real value, written with insight, sympathy, courage, and sincerity. He shows his independence, for instance, by pointing to Java as offering the best modern example of wise colonization, though he asserts that even the Dutch, for all their fine recognition of native needs and rights, are inclined to drive "efficiency" too far. Mr. Harris is refreshingly free from the average Westerner's self-complacency. He recognizes the fact that Western standards are





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not the only possible or desirable ones, and his delightful chapters on Siam will bring home with special force to any open-minded reader some idea of the fine contribution which the East, if wisely handled, may make to the common "wealth"—a word which Mr. Harris refuses to interpret in a merely material sense—of the world. Mr. Harris does not under-estimate the "good, but not always suitable, work" which the West is doing in the East, and even, he says, if the veneer of Western civilization be cast off as a badly fitting garment, some of its lessons will remain, or, if neglected for a time, be revived. But, sooner or later, the proud spirit of the West must bow before the spirit of Eastern nationalism. If that spirit is recognized, and if concessions to it are made with gradually increasing generosity, there need be no fear of a Yellow Peril.

The other two books are less important, but they also make good reading. Sir Valentine Chirol's posthumous work supplies interesting footnotes to his "Fifty Years in a Changing World," published in 1926. It gives some vivid glimpses of Cairo as it was in 1876, when Ismail had his harem of thousands of women, and a visit to the Pyramids was still a difficult adventure; of China in 1895, when Peking still kept the outer barbarian at bay; and of India, Persia, and Asia Minor as they were in the eighties. Sir Valentine was as happy with his brush as in word-painting, and thirty-two reproductions of his water-colour sketches adorn the book. Mr. Bassett has sought to suggest the romance of Ceylon, partly through direct description, but largely through a retelling of some of the more characteristic Ceylonese folk-tales and legends. He obviously knows his subject well, and writes vigorously, if sometimes a little too facetiously.

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

**The Hansa: Its History and Romance.** By E. GEE NASH. (Lane. 18s.)

This is a valuable, but a somewhat disappointing book. It embodies, obviously, the fruits of extensive research, and some of its chapters, such as that on life in the Bergen Kontor, contain new material of much interest. Yet the total addition to our knowledge of this great mercantile confederacy is less than we had hoped, especially on the purely commercial side. How gladly would we spare some of the lengthy quotations from the easily accessible Hakluyt for a few extracts from Hanseatic ledgers and minute books! Perhaps these were unattainable; we must be grateful for what we get; but neither in matter nor in manner—it is poorly written—can we feel that the book is quite worthy of its magnificent subject. The very numerous illustrations are on a higher level. They include some exceptionally fine photographs of buildings connected with the Hansa; an interesting series of line drawings, by the author, of implements and fittings in the Hanseatic Museum, Bergen; and measured drawings, by Admiral J. Hägg, from a model of a Hansa Cog of about 1470.

**B.B.C. Yearbook, 1930.** (B.B.C. 2s.)

This is one of the cheapest and most interesting of year-books. It gives a history of the B.B.C. and an extraordinarily complete survey of its work in the past year. It has an extremely good technical section, and practically all the useful information needed by the listener-in or would-be listener-in. Finally it has a large number of very good photographs. Altogether an admirably produced and edited yearbook.

**Selected Poems, Lyrical and Narrative.** By W. B. YEATS. (Macmillan. 7s. 6d.)

Many people will welcome this little book of selected poems of Mr. Yeats. Mr. Yeats has himself made the selection and arranged the poems in chronological order. He has chosen, he says, those which "best please my friends or myself, or best illuminate one another."

**Inclinations. Caprice.** By RONALD FIRBANK. (Duckworth. 3s. 6d. each.)

These are the fifth and sixth volumes in the "Rainbow" edition of Firbank's works which Messrs. Duckworth are publishing, after having produced the very beautiful limited complete edition earlier in the year. These, too, are charming books in their gay bindings and good print and paper.

## AUCTION BRIDGE

By CALIBAN.

### THE PLAY OF THE HAND AGAINST A SUIT DECLARATION (II)

**I**N my article last week I began by emphasizing that the problem which confronts the leader is a two-fold one: he must decide, first, what is the minimum number of tricks that he ought to try to make, and, secondly, what is the best method of making them. And I went on to say that his plan of campaign, upon which his opening lead will depend, must be based upon a consideration of the various tactical elements of his hand.

The tactical elements which need to be taken into account are, I suggest, the following:—

(1) *Quick tricks in the leader's own hand.*—The presence of quick tricks (Aces, or Kings supported by Queens) will, as a rule, greatly simplify the leader's problem. If, in particular, he has a suit headed by Ace, King, the formulation of his plan of campaign can always be deferred until he has seen Dummy's hand, since, clearly, by leading the King, he can have a look at Dummy without surrendering the initiative.

(2) *Quick tricks in his partner's hand,* as indicated by the latter's calls. If the leader himself does not possess a good attacking suit, he should open his partner's. It is for this reason that *original* calls in a suit should always be made in top honours; for the odds are only three to one against an original suit caller finding himself in the position of the leader's partner. And if the latter has been misled, and opens a suit which his partner does not command, a game which might otherwise be saved can easily be given away.

(3) *Length in a suit held by the leader which there is some possibility of establishing or which—at the worst—can be used to force the declarer's trumps.* It is difficult to say whether this element should or should not be regarded as more important than the quick trick element in the hand. It will depend upon the factors discussed last week, i.e., the declaration and the state of the score. If the leader's first duty is to attempt to make, say, three tricks, in order to defeat a call of five, he will probably aim at "getting away" with his quick tricks at the earliest opportunity. If, on the other hand, he is certain of saving the game, or if there is a strong probability of his handsomely defeating the declaration, he will aim rather at conserving his quick tricks and at establishing his own or his partner's long suit. Generally speaking, a suit of five or more to the Ace should be opened, since to open it can do little harm and may severely harass the declarer; but to open a suit not headed by the Ace involves greater risks, and where the number of tricks required is small, and the prospects of getting them exiguous, alternative lines of attack must be explored.

(4) *Implied strength in the hand held by the leader's partner in a suit called by the declarer's partner.*—This is an important element in attack which, in the absence of more obvious possibilities, the leader should be on the look out for. I will give an example. Suppose the calling is as follows: Y, One Heart; B, No Bid; Z, One Spade; A, No Bid; Y, No Bid; B, Two Clubs; Z, Two No-Trumps; A, No Bid; Y, Three Spades; all pass. And suppose that A, having the lead, has nothing good in his own hand. He should carefully consider the implications of the calling. His partner, B, passed Y's call of One Heart; B's Clubs, therefore, are not very good (since he was in no hurry to show them); moreover, Z has over-called Clubs with Two No-Trumps. But B, while passing Hearts, spoke up promptly when his opponents switched to Spades; and the declarer, evidently, is not keen on the Hearts, since he called Two No-Trumps in preference to supporting his partner. The inference is that B is sitting over Y's Hearts, and that a Heart from A would be a good speculative lead.

(5) *A singleton (or doubleton headed by the Ace) in the leader's hand.*—With some players, the lead of a singleton amounts to a positive mania; they are in such a hurry to try to ruff something that they will open with a singleton rather than with a suit headed by Ace, King. I am sure that this is a mistake. A singleton of a suit of which one is certain one's partner holds the Ace is, of course, a promising lead, and, if one can indicate a card of entry or so, can probably be made the basis of a successful attack. But singletons opened "in the dark" lead, as often as not, to disaster, and personally I am always inclined to leave them



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alone if I have the alternative of a strong suit headed by top honours.

The above are what may be called the *offensive* or attacking elements in the leader's hand. Next week I will discuss its *defensive* elements.

## NEW GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

### COLUMBIA RECORDS

THE B.B.C. Wireless Orchestra play some good folk-dances, which we owe to the indefatigable Mr. Cecil Sharp. The best are two sword dances from Flaborough and Kirby Malzeard (12-in. record. 9800. 4s. 6d.). But "Haste to the Wedding" and "Bonnets so blue" (10-in. record. 5434. 3s.) are also good of their kind. Seasonable to Christmas are some old songs, sung by the St. George's Singers unaccompanied, two very pleasant records, the first containing "The Moon Shines Bright," "I Saw Three Ships," and "The Holly and the Ivy" (5468. 3s.), the second "Wassail Song," "What Child is This?" and "We Three Kings of Orient Are" (5467. 3s.).

Of other records the best is a beautiful slow movement and polonaise from Handel's Concerto Grosso, No. 14, and Pastoral Symphony from his "Messiah," played by Sir Thomas Beecham and his Symphony Orchestra, an exceptionally good orchestral record (12-in. record. L2345. 6s. 6d.). Evelyn Howard-Jones has a good piano solo record, Mazurka, two Waltzes, and Toccata from Delius's "Five Piano Pieces" (5444. 3s.). We have also received four records of Puccini's "Madam Butterfly," from which we infer that the opera has been completely recorded. So far as they go, the records are good, but it is, of course, not possible to judge a whole opera from them.

### DECCA RECORDS

THE Decca Company are to be congratulated on producing six very beautiful records of Handel's Concerti Grossi. Two records (T112 and T113) contain the four movements of Concerto Grosso No. 2 in F major; one record (T114) contains the first and second movements of Concerto Grosso No. 3 in E minor; two records (T118 and T119) contain the first, second, and fifth movements and Musette from Concerto Grosso No. 6 in G minor; while the sixth record (T115) contains the third movement of the E minor and the fourth movement of the G minor Concerto. The arrangement, it will be seen, is a little awkward, but the music is so lovely that we can forgive much. We hope that the Decca will issue still more records of the Concerti of Handel. The fact that Ansermet conducts speaks for itself. The tone of some of the records is not perfect, but they show a distinct improvement on anything we have heard produced by this company before.

THE Decca records are certainly cheap. For 2s. you can get the Air from Bach's Third Suite, popularly known as "Air on G string," and Wagner's "Album Leaf," originally written for the violin, played by the Chenil Military Band (F1534). The tone is not perfect, but it is fair considering the price. Another 2s. record contains Weber's "Perpetuum Mobile," played as a piano duet with orchestral accompaniment, and Saint-Saens's "Le Cygne," cello and piano duet (F1535). The recording is better in two good songs, "Palatine's Daughter" and Arne's "Celia's Charms," sung by Dale Smith, baritone (M74. 3s.).

Among lighter records are: "On top of the world alone" and "Louise," sung by Lou Abelardo (F1536. 2s.); "Sea Rapture" and "Phyllis has such charming graces," sung by Frank Titterton, tenor (M73. 3s.); "He's a good man to have around" and "Doin' the new low down," piano solos by Patricia Rossborough (F1537. 2s.). The following are 2s. dance records: "To be in love" and "He's a good man to have around," Philip Lewis Orchestra (F1541); "Red hair and freckles" and "When my dreams come true," Philip Lewis Orchestra, foxtrots (F1539); "Sweetness" and "That's how I feel about you," Rhythm Maniacs, foxtrots (F1543).

### EDUCATIONAL RECORDS

THE following is a new batch of records issued by Columbia for the International Educational Society: "Properties of Space," by Sir Oliver Lodge (D40178); "Sunshine Recorders and Rainbows," by the same lecturer (D40177); "The International Labour Organization of the League of Nations," by H. B. Butler, C.B., who is Deputy Director of the International Labour Office (D40179-80); "Sound—No. 1, What is Sound?" by Sir William Bragg (D40175-6).

## THE OWNER-DRIVER

### HOW WRONG IMPRESSIONS ARISE

**W**HILST refuelling in the North the other day a brand new sportsman's saloon from Coventry pulled up to the pumps. It was one of the 1930 Rover Light Six models, and the dealer, who was just taking delivery, promptly offered me a trial run.

Half an hour on some uneven road surfaces sufficed to give one a very bad impression of the suspension. The agent looked terribly disappointed. "I was told the springing was one of its best selling features," said he.

Returning to the garage in a very critical mood we were just in time to catch one of the Rover Company's travelling representatives with an identical car, and the dealer asked me to give him a candid opinion of the saloon in which we had had the run.

This led to an invitation to take the wheel of the traveller's car, which had done 2,400 miles, and we drove over the same rough roads without feeling the least discomfort. *The difference was due to the fact that the shock absorbers on the brand new car had not been properly adjusted at the factory.*

The Rover Company have an excellent testing system, but mistakes will happen in the best regulated households, and unfortunately even a trifling error may give rise to very erroneous impressions.

Only an accidental interview with the Rover traveller saved one from forming a wrong opinion of a really good car—all through a workman's neglect to set a pair of shock absorbers properly!

If my livelihood depended on selling cars, I should want to run a "Rover" two or three thousand miles before giving a demonstration run. The firm work to such fine limits that a new Rover engine does not do itself justice until it has been well run in. This is one drawback manufacturers have to face if they "build cars to last," as the Rover Company certainly do.

By the way, why do designers still differ as to where the accelerator should be? I don't mind in the least whether it is between the clutch and brake controls, or on the right of the latter, but it is time we had standard practice. It is too exhilarating to find one has pushed the accelerator down when one's intention was to stand on the brake. A policeman on point-duty must have been very quick-witted, for he evidently guessed the cause of a lightning spurt and a dramatically sudden stop. He smiled very knowingly.

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### PUBLIC NOTICES, LECTURES, ETC.

#### UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

A LECTURE on "THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL LAW IN RELATION TO NEUTRAL RIGHTS AT SEA" will be given by PROFESSOR A. PEARCE HIGGINS, C.B.E., K.C., LL.D., F.B.A. (Whewell Professor of International Law and Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge), at THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2), on WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4th, 1929, at 5.0 p.m. The Chair will be taken by ADMIRAL SIR HERBERT W. RICHMOND, K.C.B.

A COURSE of Three Lectures on "LES ORIGINES HISTORIQUES DES LANGUES ROMANES" will be given (in French) by PROFESSOR W. MEYER-LUBKE (Professor of Philology in the University of Bonn), at BEDFORD COLLEGE (Regent's Park, N.W.1), on MONDAY, TUESDAY, and THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2nd, 3rd, and 5th, at 5.15 p.m. At the First Lecture the Chair will be taken by PROFESSOR EDMUND G. GARDNER, Litt.D., M.A., F.B.A. (Professor of Italian in the University).

A COURSE of Three Lectures on "THE RELATION BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL AND LABOUR MOVEMENTS," will be given by PROFESSOR B. OHLIN (Professor of Political Economy in the University of Copenhagen) at the LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS (Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2), on TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, and THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10th, 11th and 12th, at 5 p.m. At the first Lecture the Chair will be taken by Mr. J. M. Keynes, C.B., M.A. (Fellow and Bursar of King's College, Cambridge; Editor of the "Economic Journal").

ADMISSION FREE, WITHOUT TICKET.

W. S. ANGUS, Deputy Academic Registrar.

MEETING at  
FRIENDS HOUSE, EUSTON RD., LONDON, N.W.1  
Thursday, December 5th, at 8 p.m.

Speaker: THE RT. HON. VISCOUNT OF CHELWOOD.

Subject: **DISARMAMENT**

Tickets obtainable beforehand only, Friends Peace Committee, Friends House, 1-  
Admission free to all seats 7.50 p.m.

CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, W.C.1.

SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 1st, at 11.

C. E. M. JOAD, B.A.

"THE CAUSE AND EFFECTS OF THE DECLINE OF RELIGION."

SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers), Friends House, Euston Road, Sunday, December 1st, at 6.30. "The Changing World." Speaker: Howard Diamond.

## FINANCIAL SECTION

## THE WEEK IN THE CITY

MR. SNOWDEN AND MR. SHAW—BANKING CREDIT AND NEW YORK MARKETS—RUBBER AND TIN—H.M.V.

THE City remains much more scared of Mr. Snowden than of Mr. Tom Shaw. Mr. Snowden has remarked that his next Budget speech may not make him popular—Mr. Shaw that we are now paying £100 millions a year to people (War Loan subscribers) who have not the smallest moral right to it. After all, Mr. Snowden means what he says, and it is not even clear that Mr. Tom Shaw said what he meant. What Mr. Tom Shaw probably meant was that the rentier class have no moral right to complain of the increased cost of social services while they are getting interest in appreciated £'s on War stocks which they had lent to the State during the war in depreciated £'s. We cannot believe that the conservative Mr. Shaw meant to imply that he favoured repudiation of War stocks in order to save interest charges and meet the increased cost of social services. Mr. Snowden, however, did mean to imply that he would have to increase taxation heavily next April. As the editor of THE NATION showed to the horror of super-tax payers last week, Mr. Snowden will have to find at least £40 millions of additional money next year, less the amounts which he can save on the fighting and administrative services. What the City fears is a startling increase in the super-tax and a new tax on capital profits. On the other hand, the search for revenue will probably mean the continuance of the duties on motor-cars and tyres and on artificial silk. There is no denying that fear of Mr. Snowden's Budget is already beginning to have its influence on Stock Exchange markets.

Two partners of a New York brokerage house called on a private bank during the great slump in Wall Street and were asked how they were getting on. "Oh fine," they replied, "we have no stocks and no clients—we have sold them all out as they were all on margin." Tales of this sort convey the impression that the New York stock markets are thoroughly deflated. The November bulletin of the National City Bank suggests, however, a different conclusion. It contains a most interesting account of the boom and slump in the New York stock markets which we commend to the student of history as well as to the student of speculation. After all, no bank should have known better what was going on than the National City, whose President is reliably reported to have fought the battles of the stock market "bulls" against the Federal Reserve authorities. Everyone knows that the fundamental cause of the stock market boom was the diversion of funds to Wall Street for the national game of gambling. The writer of the National City Bank apologia is at pains to point out that the rise in stock prices was not financed by the banking authorities. The figures for brokers' loans reported by the New York member banks show that those for which these banks were responsible had been steadily reduced since the beginning of 1928 up to the point of the Wall Street crash, but that after the crash they were heavily increased. Here are the figures:—

NEW YORK BANKS LOANS TO BROKERS AND DEALERS					
000,000's omitted					
	For own Account.	For out-of-town Banks.	For Others.	Total.	
	\$	\$	\$	\$	
Jan. 4, 1928 ...	1,511	1,371	928	3,810	
Oct. 16, 1929 ...	1,095	1,831	3,875	6,801	
Oct. 30, 1929 ...	2,069	1,026	2,443	5,538	

This table implies, first, that the stock market boom was chiefly financed by loans from private companies and individuals who, instead of leaving their savings or liquid capital on deposit at local banks, had transferred them to New York for loan in the call money market; secondly, that when the slump came these loans "for others" proved to be an element of weakness and that nearly a third of them had to be taken over by the banks. To quote the proud boast of the National City historian: "In this emergency, as in similar emergencies of the past, the burden

of supplying the market fell squarely upon the New York banks. They saved the day by taking over the responsibilities of the fair-weather lenders and supplying credit with which stock purchases might be made. Without this action on their part the market would have had no rallying power." We question whether the National City Bank was so blameless as this historian would have us believe, but if his view of the crisis is correct it means that the New York stock markets are not yet "thoroughly deflated." Banking funds are still too heavily locked up in security loans. It is well to realize at this stage that President Hoover and the Federal Reserve authorities have determined that at all costs business in America shall not suffer more than a temporary setback. To finance a recovery in American business, to find credits for a revival in the building construction industry, which has been suffering badly from the diversion of funds to Wall Street, and to supply funds for farmers whose wheat is being kept off the market, it will probably be necessary to divert banking credit to a still greater extent from the Stock Exchange.

We referred two weeks ago to the reaction in the values of rubber and tin of which about 60 per cent. and 12½ per cent. respectively is consumed by the world automobile industry. These two industries are now trying to improve prices, the first by a co-operative selling scheme, the second by a smelting combination, and possibly by a restriction scheme. The weakness of the first is that the Rubber Growers' Association, which is responsible for the co-operative selling scheme, represents 74 per cent. of the British acreage and only 28 per cent. of the world acreage under rubber. Indeed, one-half of the world rubber plantations are under Asiatic ownership; even in British Malaya the acreage under Asiatic ownership exceeds that under British. It may safely be hazarded that the selling of rubber by groups of R.G.A. members instead of by individual members, will mean nothing against the organized buying of all the big American consumers. We suggest that until the British producers of rubber get together with the American consumers, each taking an interest in the other's industry, salvation will not come to the rubber industry. As regards tin, it is reported that the Tin Producers' Association is putting forward a plan for a 10 per cent. "restriction" of output, and it is understood that the scheme for the amalgamation of all the big smelting companies, except one, involves the holding back of tin concentrates at the smelters to suit market conditions. The Patino group, the most important producer in Bolivia, is a party to the smelting combination. We are sceptical of all restriction schemes, but the merger of the tin smelting companies, which means an organized buying of tin ore and an organized selling of refined tin, should be a big step towards rationalization.

Gramophone shares appear to be feeling the effect of Christmas. Columbia Graphophone 10s. shares have improved to 5½, and Gramophone £1 shares, which have been as high as 18½ this year and as low as 4½, are now quoted at 4¾. For the year to June, 1929, the Gramophone Company earned 78.42 per cent. and paid 60 per cent. This was on an ordinary capital of £1,600,000. In July, 1,600,000 ordinary shares of £1 were offered to shareholders at par. If the earnings and dividends on the doubled capital are exactly half the 1928-29 rates, the shares at 4¾ would return a dividend yield of 6.3 per cent. and an earnings yield of 8½ per cent. This is not unattractive. The Company, which is controlled by the Victor Talking Machine of America, operates in Germany, Italy, Australia, India, and the Near East as well as in Great Britain, and has now entered the field of radio manufacturing and sound film recording, which in time, according to the chairman, may transform the whole outlook of the Company's profit-earning capacity.



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LEIGHTON PARK SCHOOL, READING.—Scholarships. An examination for several Scholarships open to members of the Society of Friends and others, will take place in February next. Leighton Park is a public school under the management of the Society of Friends. For full particulars and entry forms for these scholarships apply to the Headmaster.

## LITERARY.

ELECTRICITY, WHAT IS IT? For best definition see page 9 of the "PAST AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS OF ELECTRICITY," by H. C. Massingham, published by Hutchinsons, London. At all booksellers, 6d. Electricity is becoming part of our national life. All from 7 to 70 should own a copy of this little book.

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Further particulars may be obtained from the undersigned, by whom applications must be received on or before December 2nd, 1929.

Singleton Park, Swansea.

EDWIN DREW, Registrar.

## BOROUGH OF CHESTERFIELD.

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Town Clerk's Office,  
Gluman Gate,  
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J. L. FEATHER, Town Clerk.

## CITY OF LEICESTER.

## MALE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

LIBRARY ASSISTANT wanted (male), with experience and good qualifications. Salary, £200 per annum, rising to £250. Apply, enclosing copies of three testimonials, not later than December 9th, to The Director, Central Library, Leicester.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.—The Senate invite applications for the Martin White Chair of Sociology, tenable at the London School of Economics. Initial salary £1,000 a year. Applications (12 copies) must be received not later than first post on January 24th, 1930, by the Academic Registrar, University of London, S.W.7, from whom further particulars may be obtained.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.—The Senate invite applications for the University Chair of Social Biology, tenable at the London School of Economics. Initial salary, £1,000 a year. Applications (12 copies) must be received not later than first post on January 23rd, 1930, by the Academic Registrar, University of London, S.W.7, from whom further particulars may be obtained.

OXFORD, Lady Margaret Hall.—The Council will proceed in February to the election of a resident Research Fellow. The Fellowship, of the value of £250 a year, will be tenable for three years from October, 1930. Particulars may be obtained from the Hall Secretary.

## CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION.

FORTHCOMING EXAMINATION.—Assistant Examiners in the Patent Office (20-25, with extension in certain cases).

Regulations and particulars, together with the forms on which applications must be made, will be sent in response to requests (preferably by post-card) addressed to the Secretary, Civil Service Commission, Burlington Gardens, London, W.1. The latest date for the receipt of application forms is March 6th, 1930.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

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